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DIVE OF YOUR LIFE



I recently enjoyed the dive of my life. Twice. Up until two recent trips to Komodo and Raja Ampat I had never encountered a manta ray underwater. I have been to several places where I had a chance of seeing one but, alas, my luck was never in - even at auspiciously-named sites such as Manta Bay and Manta Rock. And so it was with a wry smile that Ed Statham, owner of the Wunderpus liveaboard in Komodo, proudly guaranteed me a manta sighting, and at a site called Manta Point no less. 'I'll believe it when I see it,' I said.

The dive was superb. The mantas were numerous. The punchy current added to the fun. It was a breathtaking first encounter.

And then I went to Raja Ampat.

It is quite possible that the two particular dives that now top my 'Best Ever' list will never be beaten. For a total dive time of almost two and a half hours at a site called Eagle Rocks, my buddy and I were buzzed by mantas with up to four-metre wingspans. And they came in close. So close in fact that on occasion I failed to fit a whole individual within frame, their patterned undersides perhaps just two feet away. It was a humbling day, the finest underwater encounter I have ever experienced.

It is for moments like this that we dive. Here's hoping many of you have been busy chalking-up similar first-time experiences. And if not, well, there's plenty of inspiration in the pages that follow...

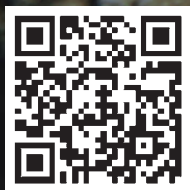
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Will

Will Harrison, Deputy Editor
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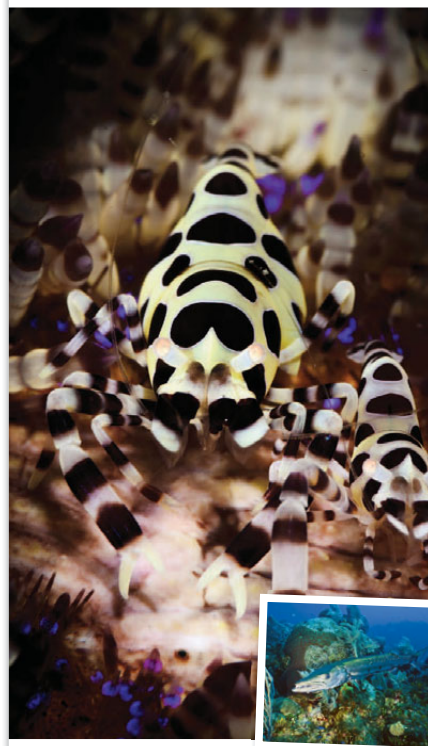
COVER PICTURE:
Luke Evans at Blue Planet
Aquarium

PHOTOGRAPHER:
Mark Evans



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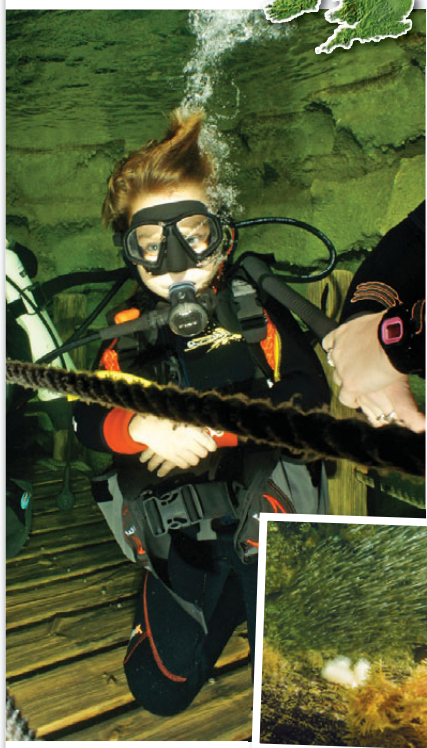
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NEWS

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120 MPs unite with NGOs for protection of UK Seas



MPs and Peers are united in calling for a full network of Marine Protected Areas in UK seas. 120 MPs and 20 Peers are today supporting 21 NGOs - including Marine Conservation Society, RSPB, The Wildlife Trusts and WWF - who are championing Wildlife and Countryside Link's 'Marine Charter' campaign.

The Charter is calling for commitments within the 2015 General Election manifestos for a full network of Marine Protected Areas in UK Seas. It is five years ago to the day since the landmark Marine & Coastal Access Act (2009) was passed with overwhelming cross-party support. The centre-piece of this legislation was the commitment to establish a network of Marine Protected Areas in response to the widely acknowledged crisis facing the health, diversity and productivity of our seas. Chair of Wildlife & Countryside Link's Marine Working group, Joan Edwards, said: "This political support has added considerable weight to the united call from NGOs, overwhelming numbers of the public and the scientific and industry communities. It is important, however, that this support translates into a firm, timetabled commitment as the parties craft their manifestos."

While this Parliament has seen the first Marine Conservation Zones established in English Seas, and Scottish Government has designated 30 Nature Conservation MPAs in Scottish Seas, we remain a long way from the



full network. Throughout our seas 35 marine species are still considered threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Only 27 of the 127 Marine Conservation Zones originally proposed for the English component of the UK network, critical to restoring iconic habitats such as eelgrass beds and chalk reefs, have so far been designated.

SHARK VICTORY FOR PROJECT AWARE!

Project AWARE, its partners and the entire dive community are rejoicing at the listing of 21 species of sharks and rays under the Appendices of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), made official in the final plenary session of the Conference of Parties (CoP) on Sunday 9 November. Nearly 29,000 letters were sent by divers and shark advocates to delegates of the 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, urging them to take action for sharks and rays. As well as amplifying the divers' voice and the economic benefits of associated tourism, Project AWARE also highlighted the underwater perspective of marine debris with CMS member nations agreeing to advance international cooperation necessary to effectively tackle the problem.

With your support Project AWARE has:

- Raised divers' unique global conservation perspective to the CMS for the first time;
- Helped advance international conservation for sharks and rays that migrate across national boundaries;
- Shared its underwater perspective of marine debris by amplifying the work its volunteer scuba divers undertake through Dive Against Debris;
- Encouraged and advanced the international cooperation necessary to tackle marine debris.

This is another milestone for shark conservation, the dive community, Project AWARE and all partners involved. Project AWARE brought the divers' voice to #CMSCoP11 and now 21 species of sharks and rays are listed under CMS. But CMS listing is just the beginning - help Project AWARE continue their work. For more information, visit www.projectaware.org

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PADI to match your donations to Project AWARE



Celebrate with Project AWARE! Thanks to YOU, the global dive community, Project AWARE and its partners, we're all celebrating incredible victories for the ocean in 2014.

From historic wins for sharks and rays to saving marine life from the scourge of underwater debris, scuba divers have been with Project AWARE on the frontlines. Our unique perspective as divers gives us a special responsibility to protect the precious underwater world for future generations.

To help Project AWARE hit the ground running in 2015, this year's holiday season kicks off with a special PADI Match Gift Campaign.

For every dollar you donate to Project AWARE before 31 December, PADI will match it up to the total value of \$25,000.

What's more, if you donate £100 or more Project AWARE will say a special thanks to you with a limited edition Fourth Element t-shirt. Find out more:

projectaware.org/give

Japan defiant in whale hunt dispute

Despite the International Court of Justice ban, Japan's chief negotiator for whaling has said the world's anti-whaling nations should recognise Japan's right to hunt whales for scientific purposes.

Joji Morishita believes this month's two-thirds cut in the country's Antarctic whaling quota should be enough to prove the hunt is for science.

He said: "Hopefully this research plan would trigger or send some message (to international opponents) because we have accepted the ICJ judgement in our research plan."

Japan cancelled its 2014-15 Antarctic hunt after the ICJ - the highest court of the United Nations - ruled that it was carrying out



commercial hunts under the pretence of research.

In a new plan submitted to the International Whaling Commission and its Scientific Committee, Japan has set an annual target of 333 minke whales, down from 900 under the previous programme.



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SportDiver NEWS

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NEW LIVEBOARDS ADDED



M/V Carpe Vita cruises the Maldives

With liveboard diving holidays continuing to grow in popularity, diving specialist Regaldiver has added two more liveboards to its extensive worldwide programme.

Atlantis Azores is a spacious 16-person liveboard perfectly designed for the needs of divers. With high standards of service and cuisine, this vessel already attracts a high number of repeat guests. Atlantis Azores follows a seasonal schedule of four different itineraries to ensure divers experience the best of the Philippines underwater whenever they travel. Running from March to June, the Tubbataha Reef itinerary is one of the most-popular trips – six days diving in remote, pristine National Park waters that are one of Asia's best diving spots and on the 'wish list' for many keen divers.

Regaldiver also feature seven-night trips on board Atlantis Azores to the Visayas and Malapascua Island. Longer 10 or 12 night itineraries on the route Malapascua - Cebu offer the chance to dive multiple world-class dive destinations which would take weeks to dive from land.

Maldives liveboards are a top holiday choice for Regaldiver guests and it's easy to see why. New to Regaldiver for 2015 is the luxury M/V Carpe Vita, sister vessel to the popular M/V Carpe Diem. The 20-berth Carpe Vita is well-appointed and the use of a diving dhoni ensures divers have plenty of space to relax on board between dives.

Seven night itineraries aboard M/V Carpe Vita explore the waters around Male and the central atolls, with extensions on the 10 night trips to northerly Baa and Raa, or south to Ari and Felidhu atolls. Deep South Shark trips operate during the peak high season of February and March. For 2015, Regaldiver guests will also have the chance to be amongst the few who have dived the far north of the Maldives on board M/V Carpe Vita's first exploratory trips to the remote northern atolls.

www.regaldiver.co.uk

WORLDWIDE TRAVEL UP 13 PERCENT

Travel insurance specialist Holidaysafe.co.uk has seen a rise in holidaymakers escaping the UK to head abroad for ski and sea. Data has shown the changing attitudes and travel trends in holiday choices.

When it comes to winter sports destinations, it seems that Europe's popularity is waning, with an increase in travellers heading further abroad. Holidaysafe.co.uk has seen a rise of 13 percent in proportion of worldwide (including USA) policies sold so far this year, while sales of Europe-wide policies fell by 14 percent.

In a recent survey of over 4,000 people in the UK, respondents stated that winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding are considered to be more social activities, with almost 75 percent of respondents going with friends or family. With the rising popularity of multi-generational family holidays, this perhaps explains the rise in over-65s heading to the slopes. Holidaysafe.co.uk has seen over 12 percent of their winter sports

policies being sold to over-65s in the last three years.

Cruises are becoming more and more popular and many now choose to take a cruise of a lifetime, often costing tens of thousands of pounds, after retirement.

With Sterling currently strong, European holidays have become more affordable and it seems that cruise-goers are bucking the travel trend of going further afield, with data revealing that a larger proportion of people are now choosing Europe. While 25 percent of sea travellers took a European cruise in 2009, 2014 looks to have around 80 percent of them Europe-bound.

Amber Howard, brand manager of Holiday-safe.co.uk said: "It's great to see that people are becoming more and more adventurous and exploring new places. With the growing number of over-65s heading to the mountains for winter sports, we believe that age shouldn't hold you back from enjoying a holiday, however active it may be."



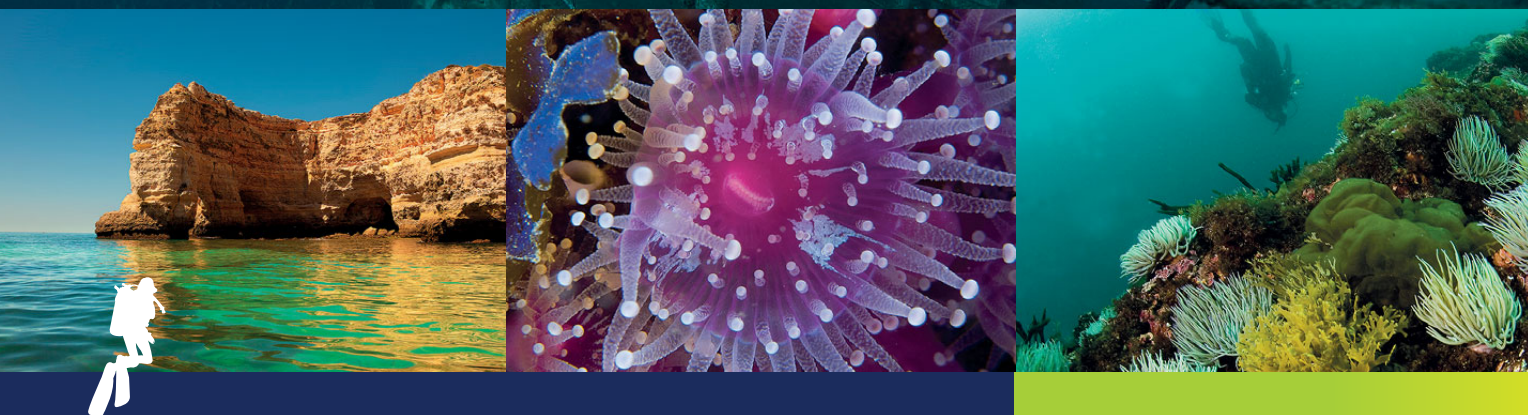
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Diving Packages: Contact Subnauta to find out about the packages that has been set up with the main hotels within a short distance of the diving centre in order to make your stay even more comfortable and at the most competitive prices.

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Massive international mine-hunting exercise in Middle East



British divers on the reef...

In November, nearly 1,500 Royal Navy sailors, Royal Marines and specialist divers have been engaged in the world's largest naval exercise dealing with the threat of mines. The core of the Royal Navy's presence in the Middle East joined more than 5,000 military personnel from more than 40 nations spread across six continents for the latest International Mine Counter-Measures EXercise (IMCMEX), which tests the abilities of the navies of the world to keep the sea lanes open.

Ranging from the Gulf to the Arabian Sea and the shores of the northern Red Sea, the two-week-long exercise involved all four of Britain's Gulf-based minehunters - HMS Atherstone, Chiddingfold, Penzance and Shoreham - their 'mother ship' RFA Cardigan Bay, frigate HMS Northumberland, support ship RFA Fort Austin, plus the nation's flagship HMS Bulwark and amphibious support vessel RFA Lyme Bay. And one of the RN's specialist clearance teams - Fleet Diving Unit 3 - was flown out to Jordan for the exercise, practising its skills of keeping harbours safe by checking jetties and berths. Nearly one-in-four participants in the exercise was from the UK - the Royal Navy's contribution in terms of ships and personnel was second only to that of the US Navy. As well as the threat below the water, IMCMEX was tackling protecting the oil platforms which pepper the Gulf, escorting high-value vessels - such as tankers - down lanes carved



...and under the water with divers from fellow armed forces



Ships from the huge exercise on the move

through 'minefields' and boarding and searching suspicious boats; three of the six major maritime chokepoints in the world fall within the domain of the exercise.

This wider maritime security theme was introduced to the 2014 IMCMEX - which is run in the region every 18 months - allowing the Royal Navy, said its senior naval commander in the Middle East, Commodore Keith Blount, "an opportunity to practise a wide range of skills within an international environment to successfully defeat threats posed to freedom of navigation upon the high seas." Cdre Blount, who heads the staff of the UK



The vessels make an impressive sight

Maritime Component Command in Bahrain, said all participants benefitted from the breadth and scope of the 2014 IMCMEX. "Unlike exercises in past years, the area of operations was substantially bigger, stretching from the Red Sea into Jordan and across the Gulf, extending our reach into countries previously untouched by this sort of international training.

"This exercise offered, therefore, a unique opportunity for nations from across the world to work together to prove our abilities to keep the sea lanes open for legitimate trade, which is critical to the global economy."

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Emperor Divers unveils liveaboard 2015 offers



Celebrate 2015 in style and warmth! Enjoy the clear waters and memorable diving with 'Super Savings' on a choice of Emperor liveaboards and routes. Deals include a week on 13 February on top-class Emperor Superior to the fabulous Reefs and Wrecks trip diving Abu Nuhas, Straits of Gubal, SS Thistlegorm, Ras Mohamed, Ulysses and the Rosalie Moller, sailing from Hurghada.

Emperor Superior comfortably welcomes 25 people in air-con, en suite cabins. The spacious dining and salon areas offer air-con with free WiFi where there is a signal. Or a week on Emperor Asmaa on 16 January on the Classic Cruise, taking in Abu Nuhas, Giftun Island, Straits of Gubal, SS Thistlegorm and Ras Mohamed. Emperor Asmaa very comfortably accommodates 20 people in 10 twin-berth cabins, all en suite and air-conditioned. The Maldives is a 'must-dive' holiday destination and the new Emperor Voyager offers a week diving 'The Best of the Maldives' on 24 January.

Emperor Voyager is a modern liveaboard with the comforts of home, al fresco dining, Jacuzzi, desert island BBQs and, of course, manta night dives.

For more info, visit www.emperordivers.com/liveboards-schedule-offers.php

New report highlights need for protect of 'megafauna hotspots'

A new report identifies 17 important 'megafauna hotspots' around our shores for the first time and highlights the need to protect them. Save Our Ocean Giants - the protected areas we need for dolphins, whales and basking sharks explains why The Wildlife Trusts want to see these newly identified hotspots (special areas on which whales, dolphins and basking sharks most depend) protected by law. This would secure the missing link in marine protection for English and Welsh waters. The UK Government is working towards achieving an 'ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas', however, there's a glaring omission in this process: the absence of protection for the nutrient-rich and highly productive places on which marine megafauna most depend.

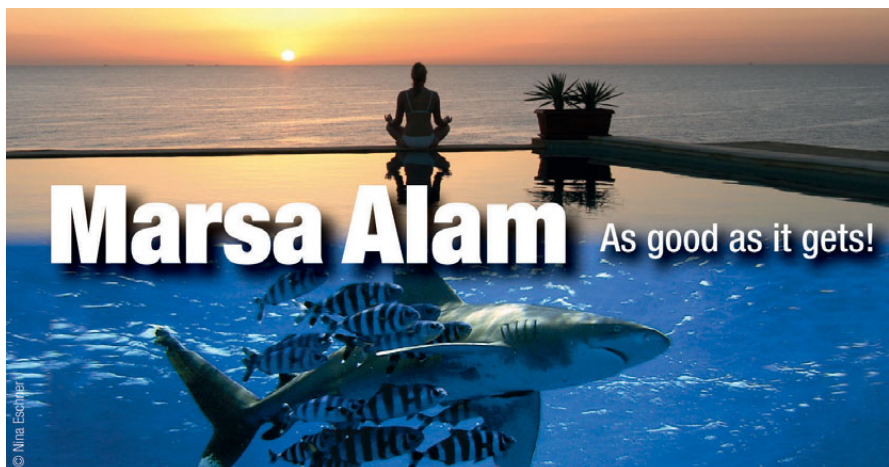
Joan Edwards, The Wildlife Trusts' Head of Living Seas, said: "Many people are surprised to discover that in the waters surrounding our shores you could encounter 29 different species of whale, dolphin and porpoise, and the second largest shark in the world - the basking shark. However, there's an urgent need to create protected areas at sea for our ocean giants and ensure a network of sites to safeguard these species for generations to come."

The 'megafauna hotspots' that The Wildlife Trusts want to see protected are:

- Farnes East, Coquet to St Marys - notable for white-beaked dolphin, harbour porpoise and minke whale.
- Mid St George's Channel - notable for common dolphin.

- Bideford North to Foreland Point - notable for harbour porpoise.
- East of Celtic Deep - notable for common dolphin and fin whale.
- Celtic Deep - notable for common dolphin and fin whale.
- South of Celtic Deep - notable for common dolphin and fin whale.
- Western Channel - notable for common dolphin, humpback whale and fin whale.
- Manacles - notable for basking shark, harbour porpoise and (seasonally) minke whale.
- Lizard, Western Channel - notable for common dolphin, harbour porpoise, bottlenose dolphin and basking shark.
- Lyme Bay - notable for harbour porpoise.
- North and West coasts of Anglesey - notable for harbour porpoise.
- Llyn Peninsula and the Sarnau - notable for harbour porpoise and Risso's dolphin.
- Cardigan Bay - notable for harbour porpoise.
- Pembrokeshire Marine - notable for harbour porpoise.
- North of Celtic Deep - notable for common dolphin.
- Eastern coastline including Silver Pit - notable for harbour porpoise.
- Dogger Bank - notable for harbour porpoise and white-beaked dolphin.

The Wildlife Trusts are urging the public to sign an e-action which calls on the Government to protect the 17 megafauna hotspots around our shores to secure a brighter future for dolphins, whales and basking sharks. www.wildlifetrusts.org/oceangiants



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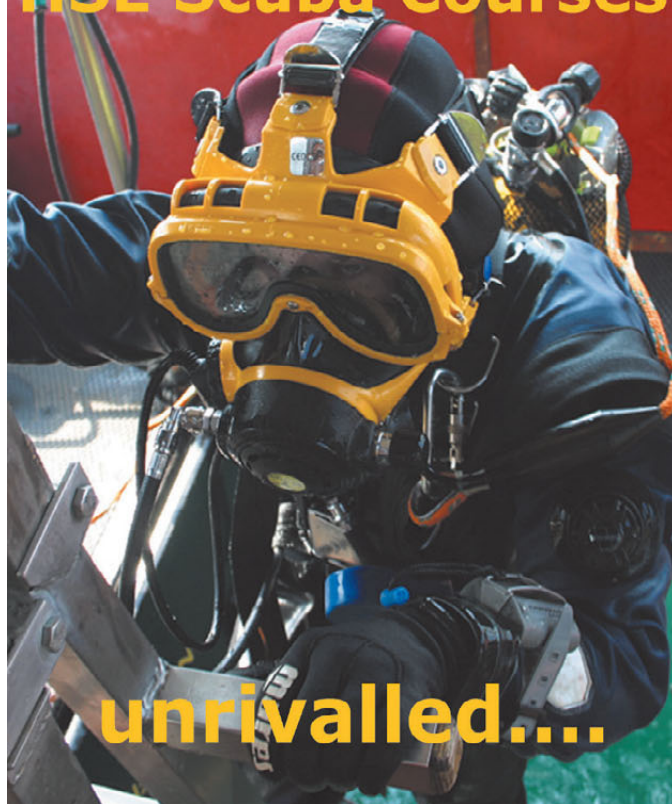


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After the Storm - A Shark's Tail

To coincide with the anniversary of Typhoon Haiyan (locally known as Yolanda), After the Storm - A Shark's Tail is now released for independent viewing.

On 8 November 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, the world's most-powerful storm, swept through a narrow corridor of the central part of the Philippines destroying everything in its path and killing thousands of people.

One place devastated by Haiyan was Malapascua, a small, beautiful tropical island just off the north coast of Cebu. Almost every timber-framed house and tree were completely destroyed in the space of just a few hours, leaving the island's community stranded from aid and any form of communication for days to come. Malapascua is world renowned in the scuba-diving community for being the only place in the world where the pelagic thresher shark can be seen virtually every day on a sunken island, known as Monad Shoal; they rise from deep water in the early morning to be cleaned by small cleaner fish.

It is because of this phenomenon that Malapascua has been transformed over the last decade to become one of the top dive destinations of the Philippines. Thousands of divers come to Malapascua every year to see the thresher sharks and to experience the laid-back feel of this picture-perfect tropical paradise.

Traditionally, islanders would rely on fishing and agriculture for survival, but since tourism

has become so popular, hundreds are now employed in dive centres, resorts and transportation, giving a huge boost to the local economy and the opportunity to prosper.

Typhoon Haiyan threatened the island's very survival.

After the Storm - A Shark's Tail is a story of a dive guide, Ronel, who works for Malapascua Exotic Beach and Dive Resort. Like so many other people on the island, tourism supports him and his family; without his job as a dive guide he would have to leave the island to gain work elsewhere.

Typhoon Haiyan was so powerful it devastated the island, but what damage had been done to the reefs, and would the sharks still come to Monad Shoal? The story follows Ronel and how the uncertainty to the islanders' livelihood unravels as the reefs are explored after the storm.

Fortunately this is a story with a mostly happy ending as the storm did not damage all the reefs and the thresher sharks continue to come to Monad Shoal every day. What Malapascua needs now are the dive tourists to return.

The film is directed by Marco Biemann, produced by Marco Biemann and Tony Exall, and features camera work by Tony Exall.

After the storm - A Shark's Tail can be viewed in Vimeo. Please visit <https://vimeo.com/106120128> to watch the trailer, or <https://vimeo.com/106012876> for the full-length film.

NEW WEBSITE FOR PRO DIVE MEXICO

Pro Dive Mexico, a PADI five-star Gold Palm Resort founded in 2003 and one of the most-established and recognised CDC and IDC Centres in Latin America, located at several four and five-star resorts along the Riviera Maya and in Cozumel, have launched their newly designed website: www.prodivemex.com. The centre has collected and considered all recommendations from partners, clients and friends over the past eight months to create an interactive website which is not only more user-friendly and covers all practical and extensive information about their large portfolio of products and packages, dive and snorkelling excursions, facilities, accommodation options, news and services, but which

also lets you dive right into your dream of a perfect diving getaway with your partner, family, club or as single traveller, supported by its inviting visual highlights and appealing accents.

Susann Seifert, Pro Dive Mexico's Marketing Manager, said: "Our new homepage welcomes visitors with a clean refreshing design, simple and down-to-the-point menu, with featured content focused on our mission to provide excellent service and quality to our clients with the most-comprehensive and accurate product information, to support and strengthen our partner relations, and share our knowledge and expertise in the world of diving on the Riviera Maya and in Cozumel."



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As a high proportion of the dives are spent in the 25-30m range, the use of nitrox is highly recommended (the course can be completed on-board for unqualified divers who would like to use nitrox).

Trip dates: 25 January to 6 February and 8-20 March 2015.

For more information, visit www.scubascuba.com emailsales@scubascuba.com

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MK25 first stage

We are enjoying a colourful autumn and Christmas still seems far away, but in a couple of weeks it will be just around the corner and there are presents to be bought!

For divers who want to make their dive partner (or even themselves) very happy this Christmas, SCUBAPRO has the ideal gift.

The company is offering a free first stage when a full reg set (first and second stages, as well as an octopus) is bought.

The offer could be especially attractive for cold water divers who want a second system.

The promotion is valid for the A700, S600 and G260 2nd stages combined with either the MK25 or MK17 first stage:

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MK17/G260/R195 Octo > a second MK17 free

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MK25/A700/R195 Octo > a second MK25 free

MK17/A700/R195 Octo > a second MK17 free

The Christmas promotion is valid from the 1 November to 31 December 2014 and is available at participating SCUBAPRO dealers.

The Christmas promotion applies only to the standard version of the G260 and not for the G260 tactical. The S600 offer applies only to the regular S600 and not the Black Tech or Deep Blue versions. And the A700 offer applies only to the regular A700 version, not the Black Tech version.

Tragic accident at NDAC claims diver

One diver died and another ended up with severe decompression sickness after an accident at the National Diving and Activity Centre near Chepstow.

The couple from Devon had been conducting an open-circuit technical dive with a friend on Saturday 15 November when the incident happened. It is believed that the woman, in

her 50s, suffered a catastrophic medical issue at depth, and her husband missed a massive amount of decompression obligations bringing her to the surface. She was declared dead at the scene by paramedics, and he was rushed to a chamber in Plymouth for treatment where he was described as being in a stable condition.

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ON SALE

Wednesday
January 7

KRESTOVNIKOFF BECOMES AN EXPLORER

BBC's Miranda K finally opts
to go bubble-free on the Hollis eSCR

Rising from the ashes

We visit Los Cabos
after Hurricane Odile

PLUS

- Overview of diving in Mauritius
- Sport Diver Art Director Matthew Griffiths clocks up his Rescue Diver certification in Lanzarote
- Egypt's Sinai as the perfect venue for a family diving holiday
- Will Harrison ventures into the wonders of Raja Ampat
- Group Test: Dive knives get the once-over by members of the Sport Diver test team
- And not forgetting the latest edition of Tech Diver, with a report on the technical-diving event of the year, Eurotek



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DIVING WITH A **MOVIE STAR**

After weather conditions put paid to **STUART PHILPOTT'S** efforts to photograph rare monk seals in Madeira, he had to content himself with a close-encounter with a movie star, and dives on a wreck with a tragic past

Photographs by **STUART PHILPOTT**

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S pending a week on Madeira in the company of monk seals (*Monachus monachus*) was too good an opportunity to miss. A colony of 30 or more seals live and breed at the Desertas Islands, approximately two hours boat ride south-east of Madeira. I was looking forward to some close-up interaction similar to the grey Atlantic seals at Lundy or the Farne Islands. But when I arrived and spoke to the newly appointed manager of Anthia Dive Centre, Carlos Miguel, he said it was against the law to intentionally go diving with the critically endangered species (there are only 500-ish left in the whole world). Even if a seal was sunbathing on the rocks, I wasn't allowed to dive anywhere near it. Somehow my email requests had got lost in translation, but Carlos said there was still a possibility, he would just have to apply for a special license. From past experiences, this process took far longer than my seven-day stay permitted, so I wasn't holding out much hope. With my initial plans well and truly scuppered, I made arrangements to check out the local dive sites, and to my surprise, discovered there was plenty to keep me occupied, including an intimate photo session with none other than Angelina Jolie.

I had booked into the three-star Dom Pedro Resort at Machico (ten minutes' drive from the airport) on an all-inclusive basis. The hotel was within easy walking distance of the town centre, which had a good selection of shops, supermarkets, restaurants and bars. The overlooking bay had a separate 'imported' golden sand beach as well as the standard pebbles. Unbeknown to me, I had chosen music festival week, so there were live bands blaring away until the early hours of the morning. This was ideal for insomniacs, but not for grumpy underwater photographers that needed their beauty sleep. Anthia Dive Centre is based inside the hotel (there are around 15 dive centres on Madeira, mainly German or Portuguese owned). They have a dedicated shop on the ground level and a kitting-up area/store room by the swimming pool.

Carlos had been working at the dive centre for a grand total of four weeks. He had previously been working in the Cape Verdes. Carlos was the only PADI instructor working at the centre, so he spent most of his time running trydives and courses. The Divemasters had much more fun guiding dives. Bernardo worked full-time, with Jorge, Hugo and Lino available at weekends. Sea temperatures peak at around 24 degrees C in September and dip to 18 degrees C around March time. My old



Cruising cuttlefish



Madeira is a pretty island topside



Itchin' for some urchin, fish come in to feed

"Angelina didn't seem to be interested and then all of a sudden it struck out, but not at the sea urchin - the grouper had targeted a smaller fish and swallowed it whole"

5/6mm semi-dry just about coped with the conditions - being a wuss I also wore a hood.

When all the divers were suited and booted, we hopped inside the minivan for a short two- to three-minute transfer to the marina. Anthia own a banana yellow nine-metre-long RIB with a 300hp Suzuki outboard which comfortably carries eight to ten divers. Carlos said that they go diving almost every day (closed every Monday) whether there's just one diver or a group. They offer 26 dive sites at depths between 16m-40m and underwater visibility normally tops 20 metres. The best dive sites are inside the Madeira marine park, which is approximately a 25-minute boat ride away.

Anthia took me to Parede Do Sandinha for my first dive and just to rub salt in the wound, I caught a teasing glimpse of a monk seal way off in the distance. I didn't realise that they had such great big bodies and small heads. I was hoping that the seal would come in for a closer look, but no such luck. Although the seals have colonised the Desertas Islands, they are often sighted around Madeira. Bernardo guided me and a Portuguese couple around the dive site. The dramatic-looking seascape mainly consisted of huge boulders/rocks on a sandy seabed. There were one or two small shoals of bream and a moray eel, but



Angelina is a natural in front of the camera

"The engine room still has all the gauges, power sockets and light bulbs in place, but some caution is necessary due to the amount of loose silt; visibility can soon reduce to zero"

nothing much else to write home about. Bernardo said the monk seal had probably eaten everything! On the way back to the marina, Bernardo stopped the RIB and picked up some floating rubbish. It was nice to see the dive centre making an effort.

Carlos suddenly announced he had got permission for a monk seal trip, but there were one or two provisos. We needed a minimum number of six divers to pay for fuel costs and the weather had to be calm enough for a RIB crossing. Carlos managed to drum up enough bookings, but the sea conditions turned against us, so the trip was cancelled. I was definitely fated!

Baixa da Cruz is located just five minutes boat ride from Machico's marina entrance. Carlos said that during a huge storm, the local church was washed into the sea. Fishermen found the church's cross lying on top of the pinnacle (unfortunately, this has now gone). I followed Dive-master Jorge down to 35m, where the slope had been colonised by huge black soft corals. After a brief photo/model session, we followed the reef contours back up to 10m, where I found plenty of marine life activity to keep my shutter finger occupied. Dive times are mainly down to air supplies, so we had a good hour exploring the site.

The Bowbelle is Madeira's one-and-only wreck dive. With some

Seastar



subtle nudging Carlos organised a special day trip. The wreck lies about 200-300 metres off the beach at Madelena do Mar. The Bowbelle was renamed the Bom Rei when it was sold to a Portuguese dredging company, but anonymity can never hide its infamous past. At 1.46am on 20 August 1989, the dredger collided with and capsized pleasure cruiser Marchioness along the River Thames. The Marchioness was carrying more than 100 partygoers on a classy 'booze cruise'; 51 drowned in the ensuing chaos.

The Bowbelle was outside of the RIB's standard operating range. The journey takes more than two hours and can be quite an uncomfortable ride, so we all piled into Anthia's company minivan. From Machico, it's about a 45-minute to an hour drive along the southwest coast to the marina at Calheta. Jorge said that Madeira has an unusual micro climate; the temperature can vary by as much as 10 degrees C during the journey across the island. The weather conditions changed from cloud and rain to brilliant sunshine, and Jorge said: "Calheta is always the sunny side of the island". The Calheta Beach Hotel has a small dive centre run by yet another Carlos, which for some strange reason is located inside the toilet block. Carlos has a small hardboat capable of carrying a maximum of six divers. Journey time from Calheta to the wreck site is about 25 minutes.

The Bowbelle sits upright at a maximum depth of 32m. It's totally intact apart from a giant crack amidships, which is usually jammed full of fish life. We explored all the exterior features on dive one and then went for some deep penetration on our second visitation. The engine room still has all the gauges, power sockets and light bulbs in place, but some caution is necessary due to the amount of loose silt; visibility can soon reduce to zero.

Garajau was my first marine park dive (I liked it so much that we returned for a second helping later in the week). The site can also be accessed via the shore (most of the Madeira marine park dives are shore dives), but the hotel closed the road to non-guests during the three-month peak summer period. Jorge said that the local divers had negotiated the rights to use the road early mornings. Garajau's main attractions are the 'friendly' dusky grouper (*Epinephelus marginatus*). Jorge said there are three resident grouper. The friendliest grouper had



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Diver on the Bowbelle



Madeira's underwater topography is dramatic



been named Angelina Jolie due to the size of its lips. I wasn't happy with Jorge touching Angelina, but then again the one-and-a-half-metre-long, 100kg grouper didn't seem to mind. I noticed there was a kind of sea lice all over Angelina's head and body. I don't know if the parasites were irritating, but maybe Jorge's touches gave the grouper some relief, very similar to scratching an itch you can't reach.

Jorge broke open a sea urchin (an invasive species) to feed the grouper, and hundreds of smaller fish dived in for a free feed. Angelina didn't seem to be interested and then all of a sudden it struck out, but not at the sea urchin - the grouper swallowed a smaller fish whole.

I managed to sample a good range of dive sites in and outside of the marine park. The highlight of my week had to be the dusky grouper encounters at Garajau. Angelina Jolie had left a lasting impression - and I've got the pictures to prove it! The Bowbelle had to be a close second - the wreck's intriguing past and untouched condition makes it a 'must do' dive. Finding a lifejacket hanging up inside the crew's quarters had somehow made it personal. The elusive monk seals were a huge disappointment, but unpredictable weather conditions seem to be a fact of life these days. We did catch sight of a hammerhead shark and a Bryde's whale circling the Bowbelle, so Madeira still delivered plenty of exciting moments - and some surprises to boot. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW MADEIRA



HOW TO GET THERE

At least five airlines fly to Funchal airport, including BA, Monarch and Easyjet, providing 20 direct flights every week. Flight time is approximately three hours 50 minutes.

WHEN TO GO

AMadeira is a good all-round destination. The temperature drops to around 18 degrees C in the winter months and rises to 25 degrees C in the summer time.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

British citizens just require a valid passport. There are no visa requirements.

CURRENCY

Euro (£1 = 1,26 Euro).

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

Most of the hotels offer three square meals a day. For some variety there are plenty of bars and restaurants (28 in Machico) offering everything from pastries and espresso to pizzas, steak and pasta.

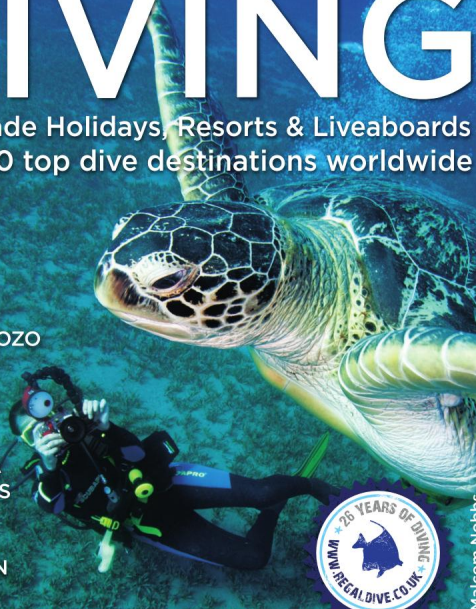
VERDICT

There are some surprisingly good dive sites inside the marine park area. Sea temperatures are a bit nippy in the winter time, but underwater visibility is usually very good all year round (accept for the Bowbelle).

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PADI NEWS

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The PADI Diving Society has been in existence since 1997, and from humble beginnings has grown substantially, within a few years reaching the heady heights of 'world's biggest diving club'. With membership now standing at over 180,000 keen, active divers across the planet, the PADI Diving Society represents a formidable 'tribe'. Now all three sectors of the PADI Diving Society - Americas, Asia-Pacific and Europe, Middle East and Africa - have moved from been connected but fractured, uniting under a global banner and becoming one entity, with a unified approach and single magazine title reaching all members, everywhere. The magazines in each region will be targeted at their members, with reports and features on dive sites throughout their turf, plus tantalising glimpses of what lies across the world. Benefits and Society partners will also remain regional, but there is now the opportunity for a global focus, giving PADI Diving Society members the chance to make great savings wherever they travel through the scuba world.

SIMON SAYS...

Simon R Chance, manager, PADI Diving Society, and executive, PADI Retailer and Resort Associations

A WORD FROM ATHENA

It all started on a dive trip to Mombasa; a seven-year-old young lady with an eager curiosity was there to see the game reserve, but you can't be in Kenya and not dive off Mombasa, right?

Although only snorkelling at this age - watching her father, Andy, 10-15m below while floating along on the surface - Athena Smith was 'all in' and booked for a PADI Seal Team experience on her 8th birthday; within two days she had done the first five Aquamissions and, over the next two, she completed the PADI Master Seal Team programme, all in shallow Egyptian Red Sea bay waters (so she came to know the fish pretty well, too!).

Two years on, for her 10th birthday Athena was back at Emperor Divers; having fully prepared with manual and video, to avoid wasting valuable dive time while in Egypt, Athena was thwarted by an ear infection on the third day so, sensibly following Doctor's orders, she had to sit out and watch as her mother completed the course they started together. Undeterred, the determined Athena completed her last few dives - after an 'all clear' from the doc' - in a freezing lake just outside Riga, Latvia. That shows dedication!

So at 10 years one month, in June 2014, Athena was the proud owner of a PADI Junior Open Water certification. Did she stop there? No way!

September 2014 saw another trip to Sharm and Emperor Divers. Andy managed to book the same Instructor, Jeanne, for the week, which turned out to be a real win; Athena is limited to 12m as a JOW Diver, so the family could not dive with other groups, but they



took advantage of this as Jeanne is an underwater photographer as well as an instructor. Thus, Athena went through PADI Digital Underwater Photographer and Project Aware Fish ID Specialities, with the perfect instructor, clocking up 15 dives over six days while Mum went through her PADI Advanced Open Water programme.

Athena is now lining up a couple more Specialities for 2015, and is already waiting to do her PADI Junior Advanced Open Water Diver programme as soon as he hits the ripe old age of 12; at just 10 years three months, and with Junior Open Water and two Specialities in her logbook, she is not doing too badly already, so I expect to see her featuring in the 'Leading the Way' lists before long. Her photos show she has the Underwater Photographer bit squared away already, and it looks as though Mum and Dad have a dive buddy for life - Andy's looking forward to completing PADI TecRec courses with her when she reaches 18!

Did you know?

With more than 40 years experience, over 135,000 PADI professionals and more than 6,000 dive shops and resorts worldwide, PADI training materials and services let you experience scuba diving from nearly anywhere. Scuba diving with PADI instructors, dive centres and resorts can help transform your life through education, experience, equipment and environmental conservation.

DIVECREW IS ONE TOUGH MUDDER

Divecrew, the PADI five-star dive centre based in Crowthorne, provided Rescue Divers at the recent London South Tough Mudder event, where 20,000 contestants took part. This was a new record, and the largest number not just in the UK but also on the continent.

Tough Mudder is an endurance event series in which participants attempt 12-mile-long, military-style obstacle courses. Designed and created by British Special Forces to test mental as well as physical strength, obstacles often play on common human fears, such as fire, water, electricity and heights. It's not a race, but fun and all about team work.

Divecrew provided safety divers to the event, manning 'Walk The Plank'. This is four-metre-high platform that requires contestants to scale and then leap into a 4m deep muddy pool.

Divecrew co-owner Martin Weddell, who was on duty at the event, said: "Divecrew provided Rescue Divers to check all the water obstacles prior to the event to ensure contestants were safe. During the event we manned Walk the Plank as the water was about 14 degrees C, muddy and 4m deep. At the end of each day



we did a finger tip search to ensure the pool bottom was clear. This particular weekend we recovered 31 GoPros, one Sony Headcam and an iPhone5! It was an incredible event and Divecrew were pleased to be of help in such an iconic event. Divecrew have numerous water safety contracts, including Tough Mudder, open water swimming and triathlons." Tough Mudder was also filmed, with BBC2 making a documentary about the event. If you would like to know more about being in the Divecrew Rescue Team and assisting at these events, contact 01344 771113.

LSD+DSL

I don't get out much, so I'm indebted to Nick Mobley of London School of Diving for introducing me to his partners in St Lucia - Daniel and Marcel Buechler, and Marcel's partner Dawn - who have just completed work on their new centre in Rodney Bay. Dive St Lucia may have the opposite acronym to LSD, but they are otherwise very much aligned (they

even both have their own pool!); DSL really impressed though, by having two brand-new, customised Nelson 46 boats - entirely staffed by charming local Lucians - each of which 'live' on their own hoist, out of the water behind the purpose-built, marina-edge facility. Appropriately enough, their first customer, while I was there, was a Superyacht...

HOT OFF THE PRESS - PADI Ice Diver Course revamped

PADI's Ice Diver course can be completed by both recreational and technical divers. It has been completely revamped to make it the most-robust and up-to-date ice-diving training and will be released this winter.

Changes to the course include increasing the requirements for instructors, certified assistants and safety divers, equipment and dive techniques updated, increased course flexibility with the use of practical applications to

teach surface-based skills and an ice rescue dive specifically designed to show Ice Divers who are also Rescue Divers how to apply their rescue skills in the ice-diving environment. Contact your nearest PADI ice diving instructor to take the new course.



LEADING THE WAY



As the nights draw in, so do more of our PADI Master Scuba Divers, braving the cold to achieve the highest non-professional certification awarded by PADI. Congratulations, then, to the following new PADI Master Scuba Divers:

- Paul Cattley, New Eltham, London
- David Croney, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
- Luke Sandler, Bakewell, Derbyshire

As a reminder, I am also approached frequently by PADI Master Scuba Divers whose names have not been featured in this column; to these I extend my apologies, as the reports from which I draw these lists cover only the PADI EMEA service area, and only those divers who have indicated that I can bring their achievements to your attention. As always, if you or your buddies have achieved PADI Master Scuba Diver certification recently, and are concerned that we may have missed you, please let me know! The prestigious Master Scuba Diver certification - the highest non-professional certification awarded by PADI - recognises a diver's mastery of personal diving skills in a minimum of five different diver Specialty areas, as well as their ability to demonstrate dependable Rescue and Emergency Responder techniques. Not surprisingly, given our shared commitment to diving and all things aquatic, a significant number of PADI Diving Society members have either achieved this award already, or are currently working towards achieving it. If you would like to know more about the PADI Master Scuba Diver programme, visit PADI's website via: <http://tinyurl.com/PADIMasterDiver> Well done once again to all PADI MSDs!



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About the movement

Project AWARE Foundation is a growing movement of scuba divers protecting the ocean planet – one dive at a time. Over the past two decades of underwater conservation we've learned that divers are true leaders in ocean protection. We're ocean heroes numbering in the millions across the globe. We believe together our actions will make a huge impact and will help to rescue the ocean.

MY OCEAN NEWS

DOMINO ALBERT, MANAGER PROJECT AWARE EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA



The New Year is a time for celebration and looking towards the future with hope, but when I read recent reports on the state of our oceans, it doesn't give much hope for the future of our blue planet. Yet, the growing realisation among world leaders that the ocean needs urgent action, and the major conservation successes that Project AWARE has achieved with NGO partners over the years, makes me dive into 2015 with anticipation.

As the movement of divers who protect the ocean, one dive at a time, gets bigger and the general public becomes more aware of the importance of preserving the ocean, it's important to celebrate the significant steps that we're making towards a return to a clean and healthy ocean. Yes, over-fishing, habitat destruction, climate change, over-exploitation, ocean acidification and pollution are having devastating impacts on our health, economy and environment, but by enhancing the protection of the oceans we are strengthening their ability to recover. As we celebrate the beginning of a New Year, join me in making New Year resolutions that will contribute to securing further conservation victories for our ocean and its wildlife. Make ocean protection one of your top New Year resolutions this January, and join the Project AWARE movement to receive monthly call-to-action alerts.

Sharks and rays not the only winners at Dive 2014



Congratulations to Bethan Paice, the lucky winner of the Project AWARE tombola. Bethan will be enjoying a seven-day liveaboard holiday, courtesy of Emperor Divers Maldives. Here she is with Theresa Simpson, Emperor Divers Director.

Did you see the news about the historic win for sharks and rays? The governments that belong to the UN Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) moved, at a meeting in Quito, Ecuador, on 9 November, to protect 21 shark and ray species. In the run-up to this important conservation meeting, Project AWARE rallied support from the dive community to urge CMS delegates to collaborate for the conservation of these imperiled and highly migratory species. And what better place to rally support for sharks and rays than in one of the most-popular UK dive shows? Throughout the busy dive show weekend (25-26 October), Project AWARE staff called on Dive 2014 visitors and exhibitors to rally with scuba divers from around the world to add their voice to the global CMS Sharks Without Borders Campaign. The dive community responded overwhelmingly to our call, so when CMS Delegates reached a consensus in Ecuador not long after the dive show, we were thrilled to announce that our collective voice had been heard by the decision-makers who can make shark and ray conservation a reality. But sharks and rays were not the only winners at Dive 2014! Congratulations goes to all the lucky Dive 2014 visitors who supported our popular tombola and won the amazing prizes that were kindly donated by many dive businesses and

dive professionals who support Project AWARE's conservation work. Up for grab were a seven-day liveaboard in the Maldives courtesy of Emperor Divers Maldives (worth £999), three £100 travel vouchers, one-week diving holiday in the Red Sea for two including a Marine Biology course, a Project AWARE Specialty course, PADI Open Water Diver courses, lots of dive gears, merchandising, art and much, much more... Thanks go out to all the Dive 2014 visitors, organisers and exhibitors for making this year's popular dive show such a great success for sharks and rays, and ocean conservation in general! Project AWARE is grateful for the invaluable support given by PADI professionals and dive industry leaders who take ocean conservation to heart! Together we can protect the ocean and its wildlife; one dive show at a time and one dive at a time!

And a big thank you goes to all our sponsors for the generous prizes donated to support Project AWARE's DIVE 2014 prize draw: The Black Fish, Cameras Underwater Ltd, Deep Impressions, DIVE.IS, Emperor Divers Maldives, Exposure Marine, Oceanaddicts, Oonasdivers, Otter Watersports, Red Sea Diving College, Anchor Lights, Prodivers Maldives, Original Diving, Beaver Sports, Pharaoh Dive Club, and Fourth Element.

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Gwawr going through the gear



Luke listening with intent (or dreaming about the dive ahead)

"To give them their dues, as excited as they were about the forthcoming dive, all three children sat in their seats and listened intently to PADI instructor and Blue Planet diver Gwawr Jones as she outlined what they were going to do"

START'EM YOUNG

Children are the lifeblood of the diving industry, and the sooner we can introduce them to the wonders of the underwater world, the better. And what could be a more-exciting first dive than taking the plunge in the company of sharks?

Photographs by MARK EVANS

The chances of my son Luke not wanting to dive were about a million-to-one. Both my wife and I are long-time diving enthusiasts, he has grown up surrounded by diving paraphernalia courtesy of my role at the helm of Sport Diver, and he is addicted to documentaries like Blue Planet, Earth and TV's Deadly 60. He has accompanied us to several exotic destinations, including Mauritius, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the Cayman Islands and Egypt, and at the latter two he was old enough to snorkel in the sea and engage in a spot of SASSY (Surface Air-Supplied Snorkelling for Youth). Well and truly bitten by the bug, he is even happy snorkelling in North Wales, albeit shoehorned into three wetsuits for warmth! Ever since he was five or six, he has been begging

to go for 'a proper dive', as he put it, and has been counting down the days till he reached the ripe old age of eight, which is the age required by PADI for youngsters to be able to take part in Bubblemaker and SEAL Team activities.

Of course, a simple splash in a pool just wouldn't cut the mustard, so I upped the ante somewhat - the big day came and went, and just two days later, we were at the Blue Planet Aquarium in Ellesmere Port preparing for Luke's Bubblemaker session in the shark tank! To say he was excited was a bit of an understatement, and sharing in his experience were Oliver and Annie Ricegray - aged eight and ten respectively - who were also scuba-diving mad.

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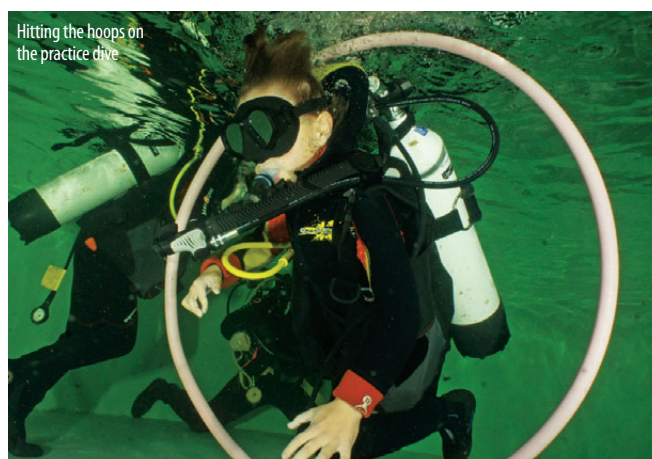
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"I was very impressed with the smooth, calm breathing displayed by both of the boys, and they didn't even get flustered when one of the blacktips came in for a closer look, darting in and out just a few feet away from them"



Blue Planet Aquarium runs several dive-related activities at the award-winning facility, including a standard adult trydive in the main shark tank, a shark dive for qualified divers, and even a PADI Shark Awareness Distinctive Specialty, but one of their most-successful endeavours was launching the Junior Shark Dive experience a few years ago. Children aged from eight venture into a special part of the main exhibit which is cleverly separated from the rest of the vast tank by a glass partition. As far as they are concerned, they are in the same tank as Wilma and the rest of the sand tigers, etc, but in reality they are in their own little side-tank. That doesn't mean they are alone - oh no, this section is well stocked with blacktip reef sharks, pyjama sharks, moray eels, stingrays, pufferfish and several other reef fish, so there is plenty for them to marvel at.

However, before the kids could be let loose in this scenario, they had to run through some theory and a bit of practice in the training tank in the quarantine area of the aquarium. To give them their dues, as excited as they were about the forthcoming dive, all three children sat in their seats and listened intently to PADI instructor and Blue Planet diver Gwawr Jones as she outlined what they were going to do and all the necessary safety talk, actively participating when she asked them questions about signals, etc.

While the children were busy in their theory session, accompanying parents and other family members who'd come along were given a guided tour of the whole aquarium, so it really does make for a fine day out for everybody.

Next up for the youngsters came the practice dive, and soon Gwawr and fellow instructor and BP diver Verity Byers had Luke, Oliver and Annie kitted out in extra-small wetsuits, BCDs, cylinders, regulators and masks. After some initial exercises involving holding on to the side of the concrete tank and getting used to breathing through the regulators, the three youngsters then ventured below the surface, accompanied by Gwawr and Verity. Soon they were happily collecting a variety of rubber crabs, lobster, crayfish and other toys from the bottom, playing a spot of underwater Frisbee, and then tried swimming through a hoop. This all served to get them nice and relaxed in their scuba kit and,

CHRISTMAS SALE!

Book your shark dive experience at Blue Planet Aquarium before 19 December 2014 and get a 10 percent discount! Quote 'Sport Diver' and get an extra 10 percent discount, a total saving of 20 percent! Merry Christmas!



if at all possible, even more excited about the forthcoming shark dive.

Out of their BCDs, the kids headed round to the edge of the main shark exhibit, and then proceeded to get kitted up once again. The Junior Shark Dive experience takes place in ones and twos, so Luke and Oliver were first up. They were escorted carefully down a step ladder into the dive tank and on to a wooden 'jetty' complete with rope 'fences', which is designed to keep them above the 2m limit for junior divers. The Junior Shark Dive requires the participants to be in full scuba gear apart from fins, and so they settled on their knees alongside their respective instructor and 'minder', Luke with Verity, and Oliver with Gwawr.

By this time, the accompanying parents and family had been installed in the perfect viewing position in the tunnel which runs through the main exhibit by their trusty guide, and so there was a lot of frantic waving back and forth once the children had descended to the jetty and started to look around.

I was very impressed with the smooth, calm breathing displayed by both of the boys, and they didn't even get flustered when one of the blacktips came in for a closer look, darting in and out just a few feet away from them. Gwawr and Verity did a fantastic job pointing out all the different fish, and it wasn't long before Luke and Oliver were also gesticulating this way and that as they spotted new critters.

They spent a good 30 minutes in the water, and were jabbering away about what they had seen as soon as they took their regs out, but both were happy for a warming shower once they had peeled themselves out of their wetsuits! Annie went in for her session as soon as the boys had exited the water, and seemed similarly enthused by the whole experience when she returned from the depths.

Once all three were warmed up, dried off and dressed, there came the official presentation of their certificates, to confirm they had completed a shark dive in the Blue Planet Aquarium, as well as much excitement when they were given their very-own sand tiger tooth as a keepsake.

The Junior Shark Dive experience costs £150 per child, and from the responses from my three Guinea pigs, it is money well-spent. Luke and Oliver are now raring to get on with all the PADI SEAL Team Aquamissions, and Annie wants to do her PADI Junior Open Water Diver course. Three more divers in the making!

Luke's only negative comment? "Dad, why couldn't I have fins on and swim about with the sharks?" That will come, my young Padawan, that will come... ■

The end of a great day out - certificate time!



Blue Planet Aquarium - shark dives

As well as the Junior Shark Dive, Blue Planet also offers a range of other dives:

Shark Encounter (£210) - This PADI-recognised Discover Scuba Diving session allows absolute beginners to be taught basic dive techniques before coming face-to-face with the collection of sand tiger sharks. Includes use of full dive kit and discounted admission to Blue Planet Aquarium for accompanying spectators.

Shark Dive (£130) - For divers holding a minimum PADI Open Water Diver certification or equivalent, they get a half-hour dive with the sharks and discounted admission to Blue Planet Aquarium for accompanying spectators.

NB: This does not include use of Blue Planet dive kit, though rental is available.

PADI Shark Awareness Distinctive Specialty (£235) - This full-day course for qualified divers will teach you all you need to know about shark conservation, their biology and special techniques for diving with sharks in the wild. The day includes a half-hour dive in the Caribbean Reef exhibit, lectures on Shark Biology, Diversity of Sharks, How To Dive With Sharks In The Wild and Conservation, lunch and refreshments, use of full dive kit and discounted admission to Blue Planet Aquarium for accompanying spectators.

Shark-diving sessions for disabled divers are also available.

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Dive Doctor



Doctor Oliver Sykes

Dr Oliver Sykes is an experienced PADI Divemaster with nearly 20 years experience under the surface, logging dives in the UK, Red Sea, Zanzibar, Australia, Greece, Spain and the Caribbean, as well as spending three months with Coral Cay Conservation in Belize.

He qualified as a doctor in 2000, spent a year working full-time at the renowned DDRC in Plymouth in 2002/2003, and has written and run a Royal Society of Medicine course for doctors on diving medicine. He is approved for sport diving and HSE medicals, as well as giving advice on all diving problems.

All views expressed in this column are the personal opinions of Dr Oliver Sykes. You must consult your own doctor if you have any doubts about your physical or mental ability to dive.

The Last Diving Doctor article!

Sadly, this is the last in the series of Diving Doctor articles. We hope it has been useful and a little entertaining. I think we have covered a lot of ground, from why the sky is blue, through the common medical problems that divers suffer, to the history of recompression. In future, if you are in need of diving medical advice, there is always a team available at London Hyperbaric Medicine, on 0208 5381222, although please keep non-urgent calls to office hours. Especially if it's about diving medicals! I always wonder why divers never arrange their medicals with time to spare? Perhaps diving affects the planning centres in the brain, but that's a subject for another article.

Overall, the single best advice is to make sure that you have a GP that you like and trust. If not, then you should change GPs until you find one that you do. And use them. Go for an occasional check-up. For example, high-blood pressure has no symptoms, but if left untreated for years can cause heart attacks and strokes. However, it's up to you, we are here to help you live longer, but you need to check in! In terms of diving, don't deny DCI! The first article was about divers avoiding and denying

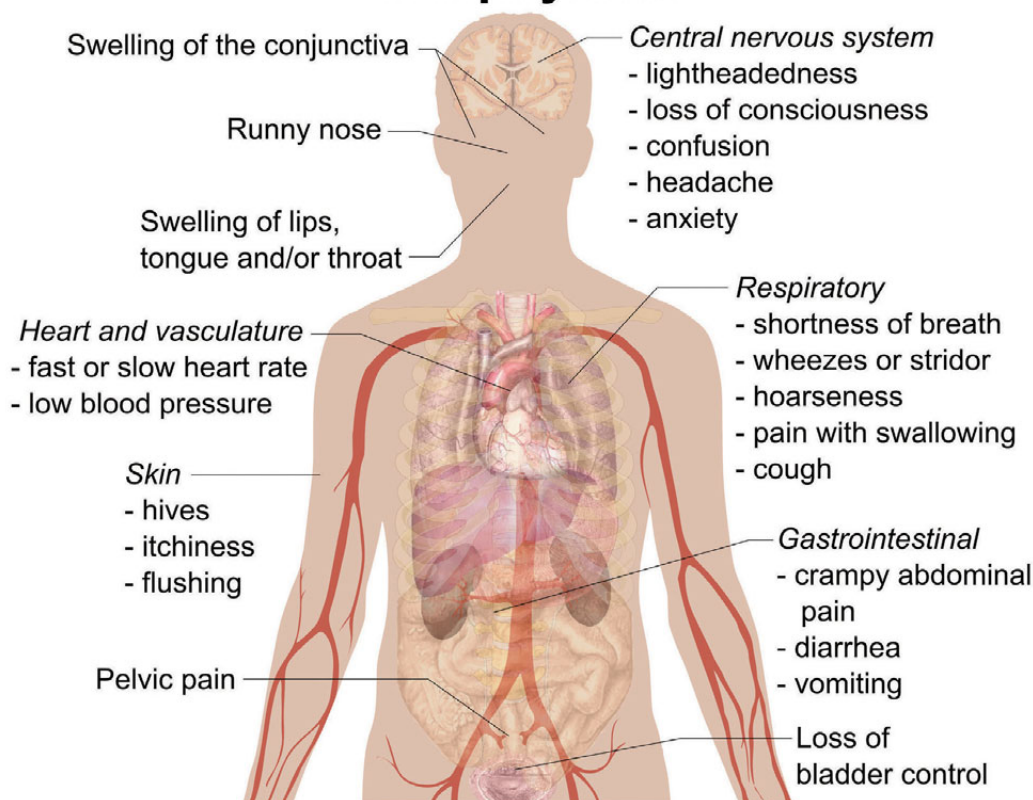
that they have the symptoms of decompression illness. The denial still occurs. Divers think that DCI means that they did something wrong in their dive profile. But you don't have to have done anything wrong. Bubbles in the blood are very common after diving and do not cause a problem, almost always. Occasionally it's worth phoning us to check about your symptoms, we really don't mind hearing from you. Significant symptoms, include any of the following: Numbness, weakness, dizziness/visual or hearing disturbance, pins and needles, joint pain, rash/swelling/itch (take a picture and email it), chest pain, and any other unexplained pain. These are not an exhaustive list, but the symptoms must have started after ascending from depth. Otherwise, it's not decompression illness. So don't forget to find out where your nearest hyperbaric chamber is and how to contact them, wherever you are diving. Finally, I must say thank you to Lisa Sturgeon and Lee Griffiths, who helped negotiate the



regeneration of my previous incarnation at The London Diving Chamber. Throughout, I've been lucky to have the support of Phil Sayers and Wayne Ford at London Hyperbaric Medicine and a very understanding team at Sport Diver, including Mark Evans and Will Harrison, who have frequently accepted late submissions. And to Ash Austin for the cake! ■

Kind regards,
Dr Oliver Sykes

Signs and symptoms of **Anaphylaxis**



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Equipment nut!

I've been diving for the best part of 20 years. Every year I take a dive holiday (normally at least two weeks) and I'm a pretty regular fixture down at my local seafront in the warmer months too. I've clocked up just shy of 1,000 dives in that time. All those dives eventually take their toll and when I was packing for a liveaboard trip to Egypt last month I realised that my kit was looking a little worse for wear! It was time to buy a few new bits, a regulator and BCD top of the list. And what a range there is! I was amazed by the sheer range, quality and affordability of the gear on the market, especially when compared with what was available in the mid-90s. I got totally carried away and kitted myself out head-to-toe in brand-spanking-new equipment. I called it an early Christmas present to myself. I think it's great how much more popular our sport is now and how much it has progressed in the time that I have been enjoying it. Here's to another 20 years of diving and, along with it, plenty of gear evolution too!

John M Barnes, via email



Diving wake-up call

Hello Sport Diver. Love the magazine - keep it up! So the reason I'm writing is a bit of a strange one I suppose. I haven't had a crazy encounter. Nor, as I sometimes read on these pages, am I after a good whinge about something. Nope, I'm writing in to talk about a run-of-the-mill weekend dive down at Stoney Cove with a couple of pals. I've been ridiculously stressed of late, working long hours and plenty of other dramas going on in my personal life and I was starting to lose the plot a bit - I mean really losing it! With another weekend behind the desk planned, I was in for more of the same, when I got a call from an old dive buddy insisting I join a small group heading to Stoney on a Saturday morning. I said I couldn't make it but he insisted and eventually I caved in, convincing myself I'd make up for lost time somehow. I hadn't been in the water for almost a year and I'd forgotten how much I loved the sport. Life down at 30m sure is peaceful and offered me plenty of time for contemplation - silence, no phones ringing, no email to check. The chatter and fun after the dive was also incredible and in the week or so since, I've straightened plenty of stuff out and lowered the hours at work a bit. All just because I went for a dive. I'm also off to the coast with the guys in a couple of weeks too. Cracking!

El'i Reid, via email

Bitter about litter

I am sick to the teeth with seeing litter on and in our beautiful waters. Seriously, what is wrong with people? It doesn't take much to stuff a wrapper in your pocket and wait until you pass a bin, or to not throw that cigarette butt out the window, or to refrain from spitting that gum out on the floor. Okay, so the butts and gum don't tend to end up in the water, but you get my point. I think it is time we all started taking a little more responsibility for our actions and led cleaner lives. Doesn't it depress you when you see plastic bottles bobbing around as you fly past in a RIB? Doesn't it bug you when you're floating over a beautiful reef or fish-covered rock and see a crisp packet? Doesn't it make you mad when you read about marine life choking to death on plastic? I have just got back from a dive holiday to Malaysia. It was stunning, both topside and underwater. But the litter! Oh my goodness! And people just don't care. Eat a chocolate bar, down goes the wrapper. And where does that wrapper end up? You got it! This is a call to arms, my fellow divers: let's stop the rot and tell people not to drop!

Sarah Goldstein, via email



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Explosion of sandeels
swarming overhead

THE SANDEEL RUN

Forget South Africa's annual Sardine Run, we have our very-own version - albeit it on a smaller scale - off the shores of Scotland, as **MIKE CLARK** found out

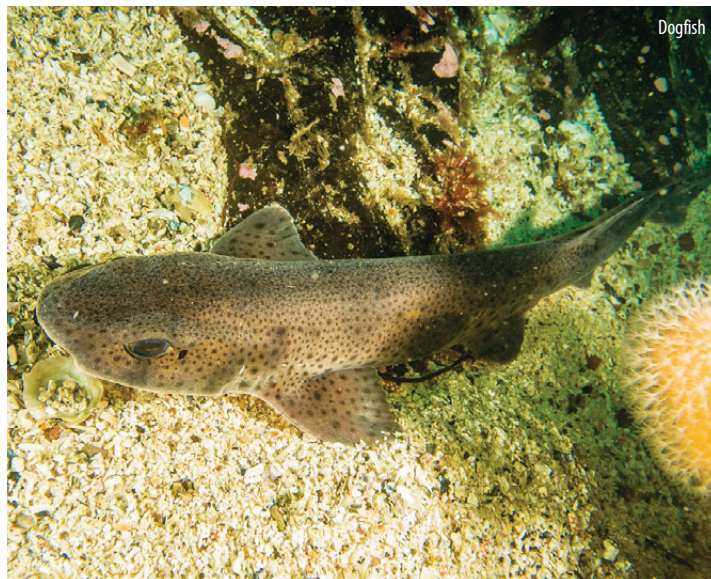
Photographs by MIKE CLARK

I have been lucky enough to see some unusual things while diving in the St Abbs and Eyemouth Voluntary Marine Reserve over the past 30 years. However, nothing prepared me for the scenic wonder that I would experience in July 2014. I had at the last minute booked myself onto a local dive boat and found myself heading out with two other divers. Conditions were superb - sun out, seas calm and the cliffs of St Abbs covered in the guillemots and razorbills that nest here from spring to mid-summer. We slipped into the water at a popular dive site called Skelly's Hole. Dropping down into a wide sandy-floored gully, my plan was

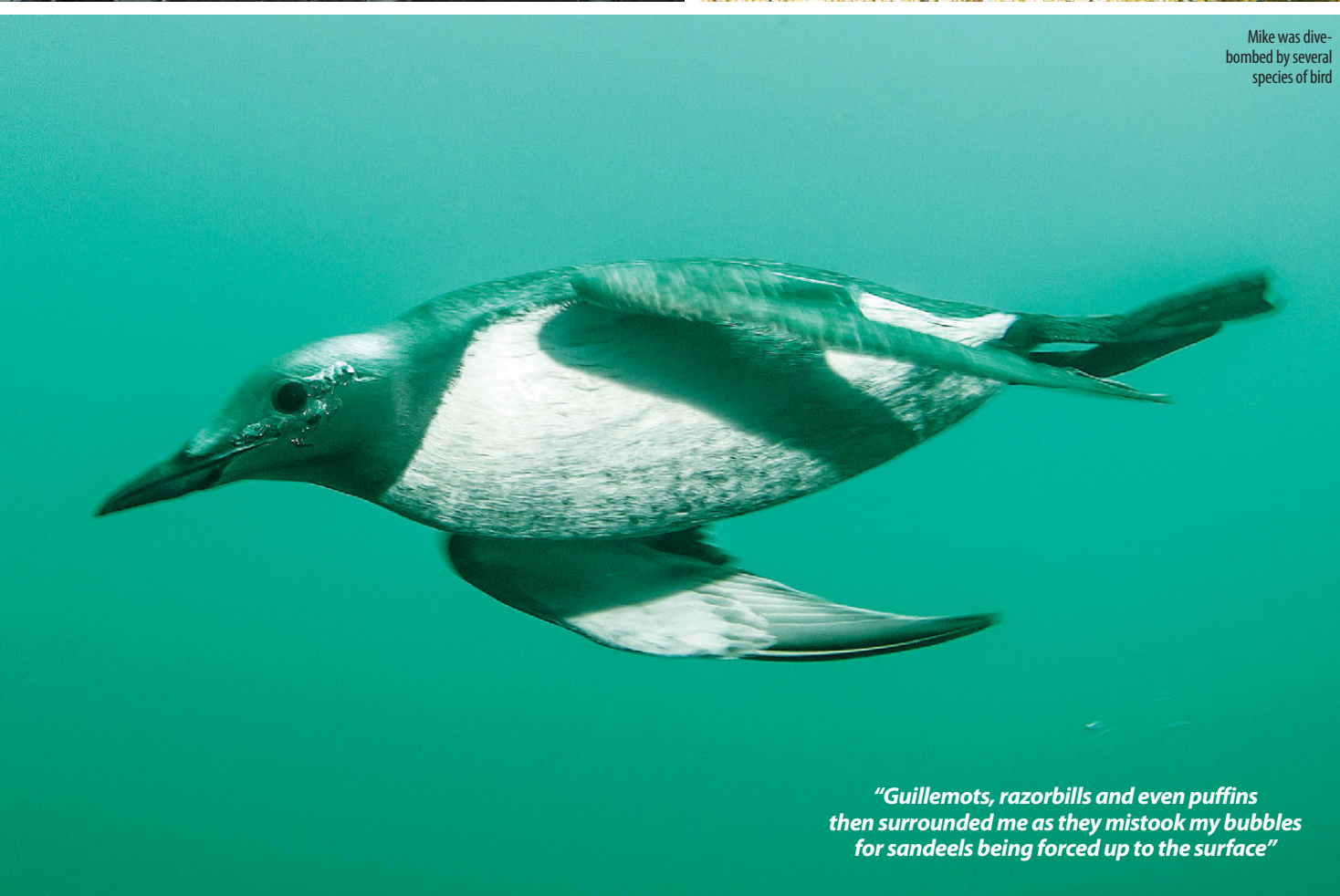
to immediately head out into deeper water and return to finish the dive in the shallows. That plan was scrapped even before I hit the seafloor. The seafloor was literally moving as schools of sandeels writhed like spectres as they tried to avoid the predators that were queuing up to eat them. This was the UK's version of the Sardine Run of South Africa, albeit with less-scary predators but still very dramatic. The most-obvious predators were the schools of pollack that were herding the sandeels. Every so often, individuals would dart into the ball of sandeels and emerge with one. It's fast, and happens in the blink of an eye.



Ready for the
sandeel run

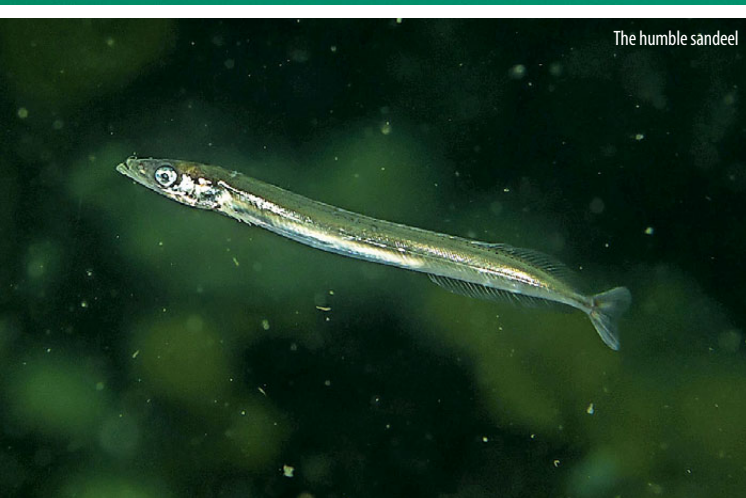


Dogfish

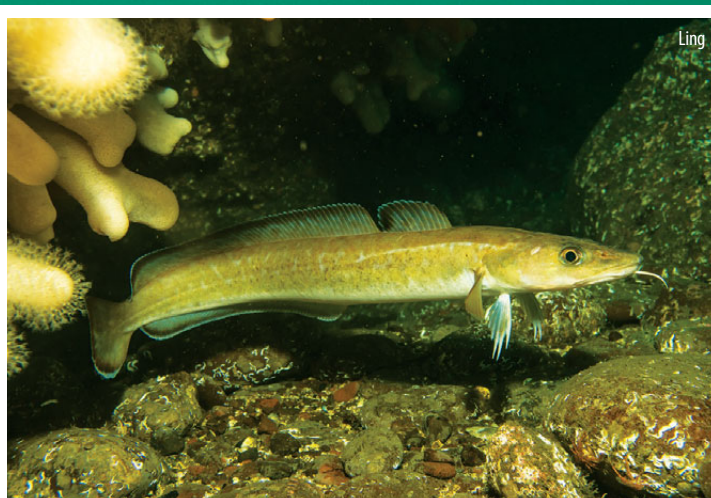


Mike was dive-
bombed by several
species of bird

*"Guillemots, razorbills and even puffins
then surrounded me as they mistook my bubbles
for sandeels being forced up to the surface"*



The humble sandeel



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The birds made 'flying' underwater look easy



It's difficult to photograph, but my video captured the action. I noted a lot of the pollack were just lying about, obviously gorged on sandeels. I watched this spectacle for around 30 minutes, the school of sandeels being broken up by pollack attacks and then regrouping. I could have watched it all day, but there was much more to see.

I now headed out into deeper water, moving over a reef of car-size boulders at the mouth of the gully, when I caught a glimpse of a silver flash beside me. Guillemots, razorbills and even puffins then surrounded me as they mistook my bubbles for sandeels being forced up to the surface. Soon they dived deeper to search out the real sandeels. I had some close encounters as they checked me out as they returned to the surface. I floated above the shallowest boulder I could find 8m

down and I watched this spectacle repeat itself. Unlike penguins, these birds can fly and they make good use of their wings when they head out to forage for food for their young. It's not unusual to see any of these birds fly overhead, returning with a beak full of sandeels. Underwater, I would say they are even more agile as they fly along with jerky beats of their wings. They are fast and stream through the water encapsulated in a silver bubble of trapped air caught in their plumage.

They are so good to watch and there were three different types that came close. Guillemots with their pointed beaks were the most common. Some of these were the bridled form, which have white eye rings. This makes them look as though they are wearing spectacles. Razorbills have a much-stouter beak and these didn't come as close to me. Lastly was the puffins with their spectacular colourful beak. They are markedly smaller than the other birds and will not approach as closely. I only saw them underwater once over the weekend and it was the highlight of my dives.

After 30 minutes of watching all this action, my allotted hour of diving was up and I reluctantly had to surface. We sat just off the sea cliffs sipping our coffee. Guillemots filled the air all around us and the walls were covered with them. Every so often a chick would plop into the water making its great first leap from the cliffs to start its life at sea.

The second dive of the day was at the Craig. This is a section of wall right underneath the lighthouse. A boulder field at around 10m drops away to some very nice sandy gullies, between 14-20m deep. I soon found myself in among the sandeels again as they swept along the gullies. Guillemots were still above and pollack were around, but there were other mouths to feed here. Plumose and dahlia anemones coated the walls just waiting for a sandeel to brush their tentacles. A school of mackerel came in close. They still kept their distance from me, but it was definitely the clearest view of them underwater that I had experienced. Down into the coarse sand, the sandeels dived for cover, but even here there was little respite for them.

I soon found the sandy seafloor was crawling with flatfish. There was even an anglerfish. It has been a good season for anglerfish and a lot have been spotted in the reserve. Down here there are also the scavengers. With all the chaos going on above,



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"With all the chaos going on above, casualties drift down to the seafloor. Pink shrimp, velvet-backed swimming crabs and hermit crabs soon cleaned up"

casualties drift down to the seafloor. Pink shrimp, velvet-backed swimming crabs and hermit crabs soon cleaned up. Reaching the end of a gully, I found a nice ling emerging from under the rocks. He looked to be too large to be feeding directly on the sandeels, but any fish further up the food chain would need to be aware as ling are aggressive predatory fish. Rising back up the reef again I finned into a large lesser-spotted dogfish. He was a bit annoyed at being disturbed and slowly moved on, no doubt full to the gulleys with sandeels. It's unusual to see these small sharks at St Abbs as it's only the second one I have seen here. Further up the reef, a lion's mane jellyfish dragged its tentacles through the blue sunlight waters. Juvenile fish finned around its dome immune to the stinging cells. Increases in jellyfish numbers directly relates to a lack of plankton-eating fish such as the sandeel. I have noted many more jellyfish in recent years, but it looks like the sandeel is making a welcome comeback this year.

I put my DSMB up as another hour had passed already. Carrying out my deco stops, I was once again visited by guillemots as they came down to check out my bubbles. If only they could be invited along to every deco stop. On surfacing I made a decision, and it involved my boss and a day off. Diving this good should not be missed, and so I booked a space on the boat for the following day.

Day two started off much the same, but only as we neared the cliffs of St Abbs did I note a difference. The walls that had been covered the day before were now almost bare. The chicks we had seen the day before must have been the last to leave the nest. There were still rafts of birds on the water though, and this led to more underwater encounters. I didn't hang around in the shallows this time, I headed down into the gullies again and soon found the sandeels. After enjoying all of the seasonal visitors the day before, it was nice to see one of the reserve's resident creatures next. Looking out of his hole in the wall was a wolf fish. These guys are always here if you look around 18m down.

I have never seen the sandeels visit in numbers like this. I hope this is a sign that they are recovering from the overfishing of stocks in the North Sea. The upshot for us divers is that when there are lots of sandeels, it means that there will be more of everything else that predares on them right up through the food chain. From larger numbers of marine birds and pollack to higher reported sightings by divers of unusual creatures such as anglerfish, lesser-spotted dogfish and schools of mackerel.

While it may not be as dramatic as a huge brudas whale feasting in South Africa's Sardine Run, the 'Sandeel Run' in the St Abbs and Eyemouth voluntary marine reserve made for some of the best UK scenic diving. Check out <http://mikeclarkdiveblog.blogspot.co.uk/> for the sandeel video and others. ■

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ST ABBS AND EYMOUTH, SCOTLAND



WHERE IS IT?

St. Abbs and Eyemouth are found in southeast Scotland, 50 miles southeast of Edinburgh and 12 miles north from Berwick upon Tweed.

HOW TO GET THERE

Easy car and train access from anywhere in the UK. Nearest airports are Edinburgh and Newcastle.

WHEN TO VISIT

Diving here is available all year round. Summer provides the calmest weather. For the Sandeel Run, my experience was early to mid-July. The guillemots and other birds nest on the cliffs between April and July. My experience this year shows that the guillemots

leave in early July. A drysuit is recommended at all times of year to dive here.

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

Eyemouth has a good range of cafés, restaurants and pubs for food. St Abbs has only one café. Coldingham a mile up the road has a few pubs and places to eat.

VERDICT

St Abbs and Eyemouth provide some of the best scenic diving found in the UK. With the higher activity found with the Sandeel Run, the diving is as good as it gets. Surrounding scenery is spectacular, with long golden beaches and castles to visit. Edinburgh and all its tourist attractions are only a short drive away.

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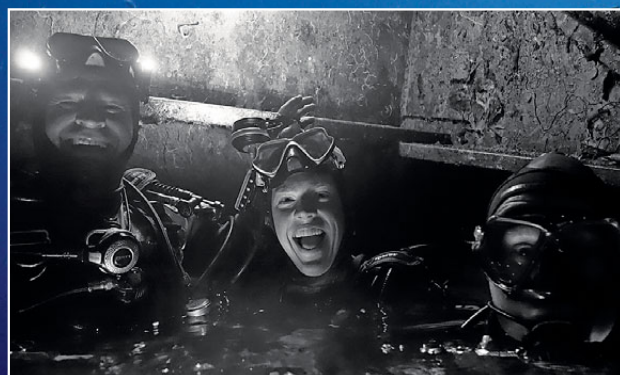
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Scholarship Diary

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SHARK WEEK - FOR REAL

Scholar finds herself living Shark Week firsthand

TEXT BY ELENA SALIM HAUBOLD

The Shark Explorers website has always been one of my favourite places to find pictures and videos of sharks online. They truly love and enjoy being in the water with these animals and encourage others to do the same. It is addictive and something that you cannot fake. They soon became my 'dream company' to meet, and for me it was high on my wish list to visit them. Fortunately, the Rolex Scholarship took me there at a time when everybody else in the world were also watching sharks, but on Discovery Channel's famous Shark Week.

I arrived just a day after a surfer was bitten by a great white shark at Muizenberg Beach (very close to where Shark Explorers is). Everybody in the town was alarmed by the rare incident and was talking about it for days. There is a very successful project called 'Shark Spotters', which seeks to locate sharks visiting a surf area from a high spot on a mountain to prevent these type of accidents. That day there were very poor spotting conditions. The cloud cover was 100 percent combined with a general haze in the air.

The way to get to Shark Explorers - for me, the most-beautiful train journey in the world. Like me, many other passengers on the train were coming to see the same shark species from a



close perspective. It was unbelievable to see a four-metre shark jumping out of the water to catch a seal! It was exactly how they show it on TV, but more exciting. But the most fun part was the team of people who work for the company. The team makes the experience very exciting, fun and unforgettable. With them I learnt the proper techniques needed to attract great white sharks to the boat in a safe and responsible manner.

Morne Hardenberg, one of the founders of the company, has many years of experience introducing sharks to people both by a direct interaction and through photos and videos. There is some controversy around the great white shark tourism, because like most of the shark-diving operators, they have to use bait to attract the sharks. Some people think that sharks can become conditioned to this and this leads to a change in their natural behaviour. Therefore there is a general concern that conditioning of sharks to a cage-diving vessel would increase the danger to humans. The truth is that in order to confirm anything we need to carry out research to be sure of what is really happening to the sharks and if this is changing their interaction with humans.

The great white shark tourism industry brings many people to South Africa benefitting the economy of the country. Therefore good management, based on science, is necessary to guarantee the long-term sustainability of the industry and conservation of this marine resource. Although this place is famous for great white shark cage diving, there is also the opportunity to dive with another amazing but not so famous shark species, the dinosaurs of the sea - the broadnose sevengill shark (*Notorynchus cepedianus*). These sharks were a pleasure to dive with because they are very curious and they are not afraid of divers. They sometimes swim so close to people that they may accidentally bump into them. Thank you very much to Morne, and to his awesome sharko-holic family team, for letting me experience the best shark week someone can have! ■

Elena



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and her siblings

Sipadan is world-famous, but there is more to diving
Malaysian Borneo's north-eastern coast than this
oceanic isle, **WILL HARRISON** discovers

Photographs by WILL HARRISON





Pelagian

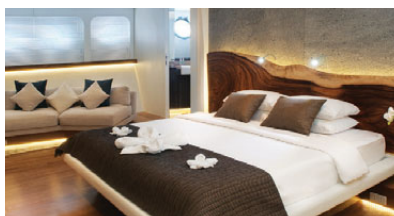
Wakatobi's luxury dive yacht

Resort or liveaboard? At Wakatobi, guests can enjoy the best of both by adding a cruise aboard the Pelagian to their resort stay. This luxuriously appointed 36-meter private yacht carries a maximum of ten guests, and ventures farther afield in the Wakatobi archipelago and the southern shore of Buton Island. Five staterooms, each with separate shower rooms, offer ample private space; a dedicated chef provides fine dining; and a one-to-one staff-to-guest ratio ensures the utmost in attentive personal service.



"The Pelagian liveaboard was over the top! Love the 70+ minute dives, the briefings and extra presentations. The dive guides are very knowledgeable and found interesting and rare sea life. Everyone worked very hard to make our experience perfect."

Frank and Barbara Walter, March 2014



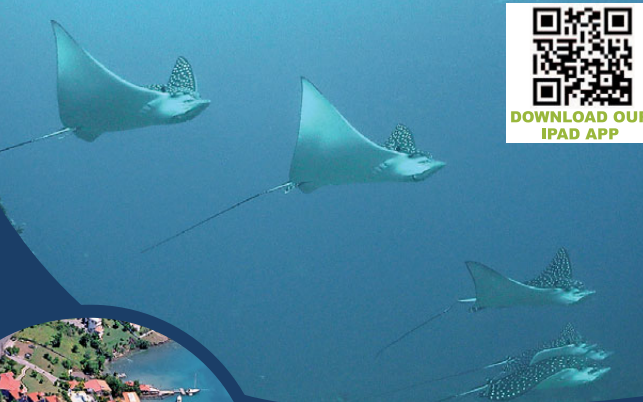




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Mabul Turtle Hatchery

Scuba Junkie, with the blessing of the Sabah Wildlife Department, has set up the Mabul Turtle Hatchery. The project, officially opened during Mabul Marine Week back in 2011, was set up with the goal of increasing the number of successful hatchings of sea turtles on Mabul Island.

The project, which follows very strict guidelines, allows turtles to safely complete nesting and return to the ocean unhindered and undisturbed. Scuba Junkie's trained staff relocate eggs to the safety of the Hatchery, where they are monitored and released once hatched.

The project has been set up with the cooperation of the local communities on Mabul Island. Scuba Junkie agreed with village elders that if turtles were found nesting within villages, and if the Scuba Junkie staff were alerted to this and allowed to relocate the eggs, the dive centre would pay a 'finder's fee' (five times that fetched at market) for each egg safely relocated.

"This project has effectively made honorary rangers out of the local community and has been an overwhelming success, hopefully contributing to the continued survival of the sea turtle," said Rohan Perkins, Scuba Junkie's Environmental Project Manager. "We have successfully released thousands of turtles over the last few years and we plan to continue to do so for many years to come."



The waters off Sipadan teem with life



Turtles are a common sight off Mabul

They disappeared into the fuzz of middle-distance, my eyes catching the lazy whip of a dozen tails as they faded into the blue. I signalled to one of the group: 'Sharks!' I said, hand to forehead, mimicking the famous fin. A gentle wag of finger in return: 'No, no,' came the reply, balled fists subsequently placed to temples, 'hammerheads!' A shiver of scalloped hammerhead sharks. Wow. Although I hadn't identified the genus, what a thrill it was to see so many individual predators marauding as one, business in numbers, Hell's Angels in a conservative town. Welcome to Sipadan, I thought.

Sipidan

Sipadan is an anomaly in Malaysian waters, the only oceanic island within the country's territory. Located in the Celebes Sea, off the coast of north-eastern Borneo, the island rises approximately 600m from the seabed, an ancient volcano colonised by reef. It is the deep water that attracts the big stuff. As well as scalloped hammerheads, grey and white-tip reef sharks were seen on almost every dive. Large schools of fish also inhabit the upper echelons of the wall, with trevally and barracuda both regularly amassing in significant numbers. Add to this a backdrop of blue-streaked and lunar fusiliers, red-toothed triggerfish and a steady stream of turtles and you can begin to understand why Sipadan Island has gained a world-famous reputation for supreme diving. And that's just life in the blue. The reef is also beautiful, home to large table-tops and myriad other corals, all offering sanctuary to a horde of marine critters.

Owing to Sipadan's protected status, visits to the island are strictly monitored and visitors must be in possession of a permit. With a limit on the number of divers who visit each day, divers should seize the opportunity to dive the island's waters as and when the opportunity presents itself. During my week-long stay in the area I was lucky enough to spend two days diving the island's reefs, searching the blue for sharks. On each occasion the diving was superb, whether we dived Barracuda Point, South Point or the cave at Drop-Off; whether the schools were trevally or barracuda, or both; whether we had hammerheads or not.

It wasn't so long ago that the now-empty island (bar a small military presence) was home to dive centres. New legislation forced all those present to move and most relocated on the nearby island of Mabul, a short speedboat ride to the north. The relocation of the centres - and, along with it, the many holidaymakers - has unquestionably benefitted the island's marine life. This life-giving boon has been reinforced by the permit system. Sipadan's reef residents are loving it.

The dive centres: Scuba Junkie

Based on Mabul Island, Scuba Junkie is an award-winning PADI five-star Gold Palm IDC Centre that offers all courses from beginners to Instructor level. Boasting a large dive centre with excellent facilities (including lunch hall and huge dive bar) as well as a private pier at which the many Scuba Junkie boats dock, there is plenty on offer. A range of accommodation is also available, from beds in a dorm to en-suite VIP Air Con rooms.

www.scuba-junkie.com



Mabul

Mabul Island is now the main base for the area's dive community, most centres having relocated from Sipadan. The island also has a busy village, with locals, dive centre employees and visitors mixing happily along the island's shoreline in the dusky evenings. It has a serenity typical of tropical islands, but a busyness that reminds you you're in a place that the world knows about - certainly the diving world, at least.

During my three days based on the island, I dived with Scuba Junkie, a supremely well-run dive centre that ticks all the boxes. The friendliness of staff, cleanliness of accommodation and efficiency of operation was backed up with three days of varied and excellent diving, from the aforementioned pelagics of Sipadan to the macro critters that first put Mabul on the map.

Stingray City, a sloping reef of hard corals that drops to a sandy bottom at about 26m, was home to crocodilefish, blue-spotted ribbontail rays, bubble coral shrimp and orang-utan crabs. Within a feather star we spotted an ornate ghost pipefish and, as well as a couple of green turtles and a snowflake moray eel, we were also lucky enough to pass a solar-panelled phyllodesmium, one of the most-bizarre nudibranchs you are ever likely to see. Buzzing about the reef was a multitude of common fish, including trumpet, cornet and dwarf hawkfish.

Ribbon Valley, another sloping reef that plateaus at around the 20m-

mark, and Awas/House Reef, were also excellent dives, both serving up a plethora of macro subjects. Numerous types of nudibranchs were spotted - including a Miller's Nembrotha - as were stonefish, banded coral shrimp and reeftop pipefish.

The highlight of Mabul was undoubtedly the green turtles that call the house reef home. With a variety of sunken boats and manmade structures to choose from, these large individuals lazily lounged in various nooks and crannies (as well as on thick rope nets as if in beachside hammocks) and were happy enough to pose for photos. I enjoyed the small critters, but those guys were just awesome.

Si Amil and Danawan Islands

Si Amil Island is unquestionably the beauty of the bunch, as picture-perfect as they come. With a white sand beach backed by palm trees, the island rises to a small peak that drops dramatically into the ocean, a cliff shrouded in jungle.

Stunning topside, the island also boasts some excellent sights under the waterline. Monkey Pocket is a pretty dive site with a healthy array of soft corals and critters such as spiny-tailed devil rays, white-mouthed moray eels and an ornate sapsucking slug on show. Meditation Wall (Danawan Island) and First Beach aren't quite so attractive, but on their respective rubble-strewn and sandy seabeds lurked all manner of

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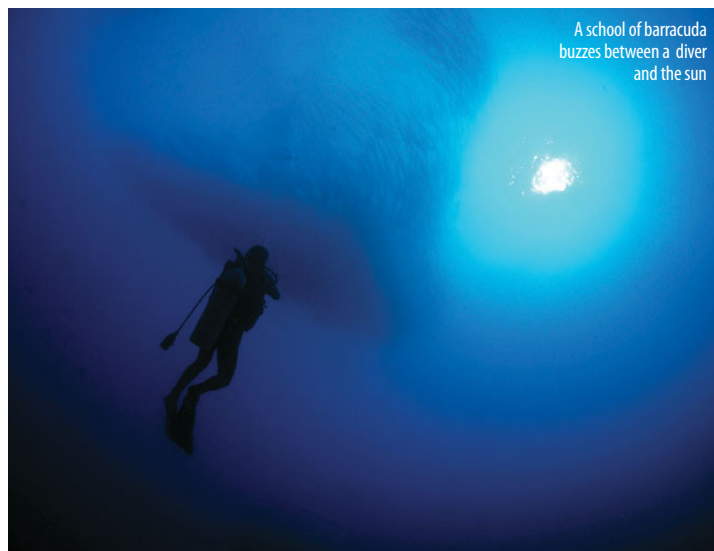
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A school of barracuda buzzes between a diver and the sun



The Seaventures rig at sunset



Healthy soft corals are commonplace

macro creatures, from stick pipefish, octopus and clown- and painted-frogfish on the Wall to cockatoo waspfish, peacock flounders and flying gurnards on the Beach. It was also at First Beach that one of the guides spotted a hairy frogfish: cue underwater bedlam as the water was punched in joy, two of the guides having coveted this shaggy chappy for many a year. They'd finally got their man!

Kapalai

The island of Kapalai isn't much of an island, rather a sandbar with a stilted village resort build atop it. But it does boast some decent diving, with a collection of artificial reefs having been sunk to create a busy house reef. The assortment of metal and rock structures are now home to all manner of critters from pipefish and nudibranchs to crabs and crocodilefish, all surrounded by common reef fish busily going about their business.

Seaventures house reef

Ok, so it's not an island, but it does offer a decent dive. Beneath and around the rig, which is supported by a series of pillars, are several artificial structures and tyre piles that have been colonised by marine life - and some of it is huge! Some of the scorpionfish were among the biggest I have ever seen. For those staying on the rig itself, the site is accessed by a lift that drops you from the main platform straight into the water. What's more, guests are offered unlimited diving so it's just a case of finding your buddy, grabbing a couple of tanks and taking the elevator down... ■

The dive centres: Seaventures

Located a short distance from the Mabul shoreline, this converted expedition rig certainly has the novelty factor. But there is more to this metal monstrosity than its uniqueness: Seaventures is a PADI five-star IDC Dive Resort that offers all courses from beginners to Instructor level. Though the centre may still look like a working rig, it is fully converted and now boasts comfortable rooms, a large bar/eating area and, most excitingly, a lift straight into the Celebes Sea. And the helipad is now a sundeck. www.seaventuresdive.com

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW SIPADAN AND SURROUNDING ISLANDS



HOW TO GET THERE

It is quite a trek from the UK - first, Kuala Lumpur, and then from there a flight to Tawau is required. From there, it's an hour-long taxi ride to Semporna, where a speedboat transports you out to Mabul.

WHEN TO VISIT

Thanks to their positioning in the Celebes Sea, you can dive the islands all year round.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

British citizens just need a valid passport with six months left until expiry.

CURRENCY

(Malaysian Ringgit: £1 = 5.25MYR).

WHERE TO EAT AND MEET

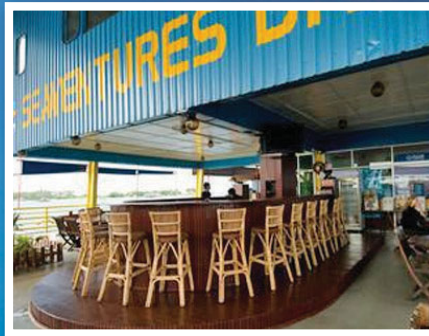
The cafeterias at Scuba Junkie and Seaventures offer buffet-style eating, with plenty of choice for all tastes.

VERDICT

Sipadan and her siblings offer some sumptuous diving, the sheer variety perhaps its most luring aspect. Whether you're into the small stuff or the big stuff, you'll be sure to leave for home a very happy holidaymaker.

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What's New

SCUBAPRO NOVA SCOTIA (SRP: £389 | €485.64)

Positioned between a traditional wetsuit and a neoprene drysuit, the semi-dry dive suit's design concept is simple: Combine the snug fit of a wetsuit with some of the sealing elements of a drysuit. By doing so you eliminate the bulk and hydrodrag that's inherent in most drysuits, while minimising heat-stealing water flow that's inevitable in most wetsuits. In the semi-dry arena, Scubapro's Nova Scotia ranks as one of the best, and it enters 2015 with a number of upgrades. Last year's 6.5mm has been replaced with a new model: a 7.5mm version, made with 100 percent water-repellent Everflex neoprene. New styling has freshened the overall look of the suit, and improved thermoplastic kneepads and Powertex anti-abrasion patterns on the shoulders provide even more protection. Also, the old Ti-Zip master seal zipper has been replaced with a new flexible YKK zipper to increase comfort, an improved protective spine pad provides extra protection where the tank meets the diver's back, there are improved I-Safe straps on both arms for securing wrist instruments and a handy 3D cargo pocket for carrying accessories. It comes complete with a 6.5mm hood.

www.scubapro.co.uk



FOURTH ELEMENT ARCTIC EXPEDITION (SRP: £279 | €348.31)

The Arctic Expedition brings Fourth Element's knowledge of performance fabrics and bio-mapped design together to create a new under-suit in its Expedition series. Enhanced insulation is provided in key exposure areas by extra layers of high-density fleece and waterproof, windproof panels. The outer fabric is protected with a ceramic print to minimize any effect of abrasion from the inside of drysuits, and waterproof fabric provides further protection to the knees and seat - invaluable when getting ready on a wet dive deck. Unique thumb-loops prevent the sleeves riding up when donning the drysuit, but retract to prevent them being caught in the wrist seals. Zipped hip pocket is positioned for ease of access while wearing a cross-zip drysuit, without needing to remove the suit - ideal for carrying a key. Handwarmer pockets on the leggings provide added comfort. Available in men's and women's two-pieces, and unisex one-piece.

www.fourthelement.com



EXPOSURE MARINE XS100 (SRP: £64.95 | €81.09)

Enhance your next dive with Exposure's new XS100 series, weighing only 37 grams and just over 5cm in length. Tough grip design and sealed to 100m encourages use in cold, wet environments and the toughest terrain. High and low outputs and its compact construction make it perfect both in and out of the water. Discover the magical world of fluoro diving with the powerful blue LED of the XS100-B. Or get that close-up night image and protect your night vision with the red beam from the XS100-R.

www.use1.com/exposure-marine/diving-lights.com



DRYROBE (SRP: £69.99-£74.99 | €87.38-€93.62)

The original DryRobe was reviewed last year, and we were very impressed. It may look like an oversized rain-mac, but in fact, it is a well-thought-out piece of kit which lets you get warm and dry without ever needing to remove it.

The DryRobe has a waterproof and windproof exterior nylon fabric coupled with a lining that dries you and keeps you warm. Wear it over your wet or drysuit to retain thermal warmth, or at the end of the day, slip out of your wettie inside it, dry off and then get dressed, all protected from the elements. Soft-lined external pockets keep your hands warm, and there is also a large internal storage pocket and an MP3 player pocket. Now the team at DryRobe have brought out extra-small and small versions, so that children - and smaller adults - can benefit from the product.

www.dryrobe.com



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WATERPROOF W7 (SRP: £1,595 | €1991.23)



Waterproof has upgraded the top-selling model D7 PRO with ISS, the unique Integrated Silicone Seal system Waterproof developed and presented to the diving market recently.

D7 PRO ISS, a high-end reinforced trilaminate suit that has DuPont™ Kevlar® reinforced knees and boots, double expandable pockets and front-entry system for easy self-donning.

It comes with a H1 5/7mm hood with double vent H.A.V.S technology, a Waterproof 1000 Cordura bag, which can be carried as a backpack, low pressure hose, braces and a spare kit of silicone seals.

To make sure you get the perfect fit, Waterproof has developed a step-by-step sizing system - check out: <http://waterproofsizing.com>

www.cpspartnership.co.uk

WATERPROOF D9 (SRP: £995 | €1242.18)



The D9 breathable drysuit is Waterproof's answer to the growing demand for a light traveller, tropical diving and snorkelling drysuit. It's extremely light and breathable properties add to the comfort of the user.

The light quad-layer fabric with the breathable membrane in combination with ultra-sonic welded socks makes the suit easy to fold and transport. It weighs only around 2kg, valves included. But even with adequate tear, puncture and wear resistance, this is a suit designed for more delicate diving - it is not constructed for advanced technical or wreck diving.

The suit is equipped with integrated braces and together with the crotch strap they form a telescope waist.

Thanks to this telescope waist construction, the ergonomics of the suit give a feeling of ordinary cloth. It comes with a low pressure hose, braces and lightweight ventilated bag.

To make sure you get the perfect fit, Waterproof has developed a step-by-step sizing system - check out: <http://waterproofsizing.com>

www.cpspartnership.co.uk

HALCYON FLARE AND FOCUS

(SRP: FROM £705 | €880.14)

Halcyon Flare and Focus underwater torches mark a new age in the evolution of LED primary lights. Powered by a unique Halcyon LUX engine, they produce almost twice the light of a 21W HID while drawing less than half the power. The Focus features an adjustable beam to switch between intense focus and a wide beam for underwater video purposes. Adjustable handle, lightweight battery pack, auto shut-down on low power, overheat protection and plenty more.

www.dirdirect.com



SUBGEAR DIVE ALERT PLUS

(SRP: £110 | €137.33)

The Dive Alert Plus is an underwater and surface emergency device that fits between the power inflator and the low-pressure hose. One part of the unit sends out a honking sound underwater to get the attention of your fellow divers, and the other part emits a loud horn on the surface to attract the boat. Available with standard inflator connector and AIR2 connector.

www.subgear.com



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Each month, the Sport Diver Test Team assembles to rate and review a selection of diving equipment from a range of manufacturers

Gear on test

PRIMARY TORCHES

After last month's review of back-up torches, it is time to turn our attentions to a primary torch suitable for use in the UK and also abroad. We haven't included umbilical torches, as they will be reviewed separately another time.

We tested a selection of primary torches from various manufacturers, and these ranged in size from fairly compact battery-operated units to larger rechargeable torches.

We took them to task in the depths of Gildenburgh Water, in water with a couple of metres visibility, shining their beam against a 'target' to show the penetration and spread of light. We also assessed their ease of use when wearing gloves.

NB: Thanks to Steve Bateman of ProScuba for stepping in at the last minute to assist on this test.

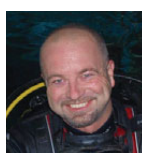
ON TEST

MODELS

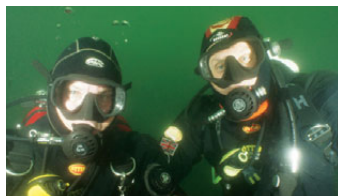
BigBlue TL2500
Hollis LED 6
Light & Motion Sola Dive 2000
Mares EOS 10R
Scubapro Nova 700
SubGear Prolight SP30
UK Light Cannon eLED

Date tested 26 Nov 14
Water temperature
11 degrees C

TEST TEAM



Mark Evans
Sport Diver editor
PADI Divemaster
28 years of diving experience



Andy Webb and Steve Bateman



"We tested them in the depths of Gildenburgh Water, shining their beam against a 'target' to show the penetration and spread of light"

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Primary torches

BigBlue TL2500



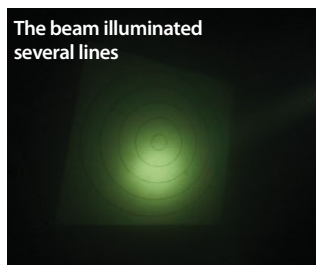
Mark: BigBlue are a relatively new name on the underwater dive light market in this country, but given this performance, they are sure to have a bright future (sorry, couldn't resist...).

The TL2500 is quite a chunky unit, which sits comfortably on the back of your hand in its supplied neoprene Goodman handle-style mounting.

The light source comprises of three XML LEDs, which give out a ten-degree beam and are powered by a Li-ion battery. It has no less than four outputs levels - 250 lumens (15 hour burntime), 635 lumens (six hour burntime), 1,250 lumens (three hour burn time) and 2,500 lumens (one-and-a-half hour burntime).

It is easily turned on with a push button, which incorporates a battery indicator - blue when full, amber when running low. Comes complete with battery and charging cradle.

The beam illuminated several lines



Battery indicator button



SPORT DIVER VERDICT

Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



WE LIKE...

Performance, looks, build quality



WE DON'T LIKE...

Nothing worth mentioning

Hollis LED 6

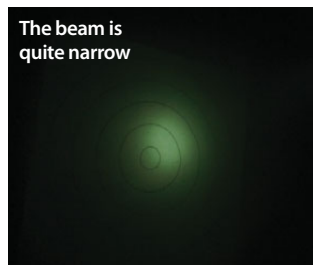


Mark: Absolute bargain price for this big daddy in the Hollis handheld LED family (coming at the head of the Mini LED and LED 3), which while it is at the bottom end of the price scale punched above its weight in terms of performance.

Easily turned on and off by a magnetic push button on the base of the anodised aluminium hilt, this traditional-looking six-watt torch sits nicely in your hand and is small enough to fit in a large BCD pocket or drysuit pouch.

It is depth-rated to 200m and comes complete with a safety lanyard. It runs on three C-cell batteries, which produce a 360-lumen, eight degree beam, with a burntime of seven hours in total.

The beam is quite narrow



Single LED



SPORT DIVER VERDICT

Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



WE LIKE...

Looks, build quality, price, performance



WE DON'T LIKE...

Nothing worth mentioning

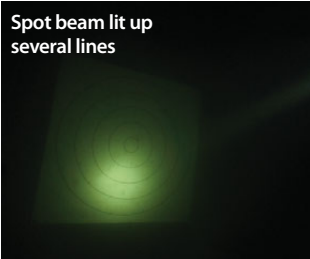


Primary torches

Light & Motion Sola Dive 2000



Mark: I have been impressed by this next generation of Light & Motion torches since we reviewed the Sola Tech 500 a couple of years ago. The Sola Dive 2000, while looking basically the same in terms of a package, punches out an amazing 2,000 lumens, giving burntimes from 55 minutes to over seven hours. The sliding switch on the top of the unit, which can be locked by turning it sideways to prevent accidental activation, allows the user to choose a 12 degree spot or 60 degree flood beam. It can be fully charged in just 150 minutes, and being fully sealed, you just plug the charger in the back of the unit - simple! It is depth-rated to 90m, and comes complete with a Ballistic Goodman-style material handle. Very powerful little package that gives out a beam that belies its compact size. Expensive, yes, but if you have the cash, worth it.



SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

WE LIKE...
Performance, size, build quality

WE DON'T LIKE...
Price will put many people off

Mares EOS10R



Mark: The EOS 10R is a good-looking unit which sits well in your hand and has that definite 'lightsabre' appeal. Made from a stylish dull finish anodised aluminium, it pumps out over 1,000 lumens from a single high-power LED, and gives a burntime of 90 minutes.

It has an external charging socket for the NiMH batteries to eliminate chances of flooding, and the torch and charger come in a neat zippered tube-style carry case. There is a locking mechanism to prevent accidental operation, and this and the twisting magnetic switch ring are easy to operate one-handed even with thick neoprene gloves on. It is depth-rated to 100m, and comes complete with a safety lanyard.



SPORT DIVER VERDICT	
Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★

WE LIKE...
Performance, looks, build quality

WE DON'T LIKE...
Nothing worth mentioning

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EQUIPMENT FOR ADVENTURE

Primary torches

Scubapro Nova 700



Mark: The Nova 700 is the latest light to join the Scubapro range, and it certainly looks handsome with its polished aluminium body and traditional styling. With the newest XML2 LED fitted in the head, it produces 700 lumens in a nice, tight beam, which cut surprisingly well through the murk of Gildenburgh.

It turns on by twisting the head, which has a nice rubber sleeve so your wet hands don't slip or lose grip, and I liked the shaped cap at the hilt which prevents the torch from rolling if it put on a flat, uneven surface.

It runs on three C-cell batteries (either rechargeable or disposable), and is equipped with an overpressure valve.

It comes complete with a safety lanyard.

Bright spot beam



Rubber collar prevents rolling



SPORT DIVER VERDICT

Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



WE LIKE...

Looks, price, performance



WE DON'T LIKE...

Nothing worth mentioning

SubGear Prolight SP30



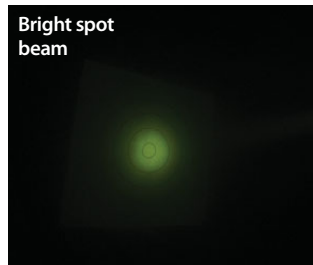
Mark: SubGear continues to climb the ranks in terms of stylish, yet functional, diving equipment, and this Prolight adds another string to their bow. Looking cool in its black anodised aluminium finish, the torch produces 500 lumens from its Cree XML LED, which is powered by three C-cell batteries, giving a burntime of 14-18 hours.

It is turned on, like the Scubapro, by twisting the head, and like its company sibling has a shaped cap around the hilt to prevent it rolling away.

Again, like the Nova 700, the Prolight gave out a surprisingly bright white beam which illuminated the centre of the target well.

It comes complete with a safety lanyard.

Bright spot beam



Single LED



SPORT DIVER VERDICT

Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



WE LIKE...

Price, performance, build quality



WE DON'T LIKE...

Nothing worth mentioning



fourth element
DRYPACK...

Waterproof welded seams and comfortable, adjustable rucksack style straps make the drypack an instant classic that will be as useful off the dive boat as it is on it. The roll top closure is so simple to use, and a small internal pocket ensures that keys and small items do not end up at the bottom of the bag. **Volume 45 litres.**

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UK Light Cannon eLED



Mark: The UK Light Cannon has been around for many years, first as a HID light, then mutating into this eLED version. This old-school ABS and polycarbonate design - it can either be lantern or pistol-grip - has developed a firm following and still delivers a solid performance. It feels chunky and reliable in your hand.

A pair of water-cooled high-intensity LEDs delivers over 10 watts of power, and a power control circuit maintains almost constant brightness.

The beam is activated by a non-breakable locking switch, and this enables you to select half or full power to extend the battery life - you get 14 hours burntime on half and nine hours on full power.

It is powered by eight disposable C-cell alkaline batteries, or a rechargeable NiCad upgrade kit. It comes complete with a safety lanyard.

Fairly tight beam



SPORT DIVER VERDICT

Performance	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Looks	★★★★★
Value for money	★★★★★



WE LIKE...

Solid design, robust, performance



WE DON'T LIKE...

Old-school design won't appeal to some

Sport Diver VERDICT



Handheld primary torches have come on a long way in recent years, and there are a couple in this group that give out a beam that is more akin to something you'd expect from an umbilical unit, but without the faff of a battery pack and cable.

For the Best Value award, it was a straight shoot-out between the Scubapro Nova 700 and the SubGear Prolight SP30. Not surprisingly given they have the same parent company, both torches look very similar in their basic design, and when you look into the head at the LED, they are pretty much identical. One has a nifty tech-black finish, the other has a slick polished look, but other than that it is impossible to separate the two - they even cost the same amount! Hence, we gave them both the award, as for the money, they produced a decent beam in typical UK conditions. The Choice award was a little harder. The Mares EOS 10R, the BigBlue TL2500 and the Light & Motion Sola Dive 2000 were all in the running. The Mares gave a decent showing, but the BigBlue and Light & Motion were brighter. If money is no object, the Sola 2000 is an awesome, multi-purpose unit, but nearly £700 is a lot of cash. The BigBlue is not cheap either, but it is a solid performer and would make a fine UK or travel primary torch, so it took the Choice award.

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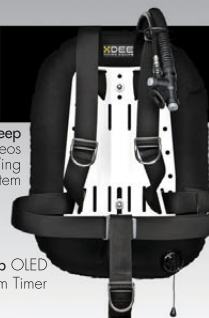
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xDeep OLED Bottom Timer



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Products which either don't fit into a group test situation or are new to the market are given the once-over by a member of the Test Team

Test Extra

Beaver Sports 11.1 aluminium cylinders (SRP: £216-£252 | €272-€318)

MARK EVANS: Sidemount diving is becoming all the rage, and manufacturers are producing new sidemount harness and regulator rigs every day. You can dive sidemount in steel or ali cylinders, but I prefer aluminium, as they sit nicer in the water due to their buoyant nature.

Beaver Sports stock a nice range of 11.1-litre aluminium cylinders, with a 207bar working pressure, that only weigh 14.2kg. These come in either natural (£216), white (£225) or polished (£252) finishes.

Martin at Beaver Sports said he couldn't understand why more people were buying the natural finish when the polished ones look so 'bling' - natural outsells polished four to one - and he wondered if it was due to a fear that they would soon lose their lustre after months of use. To test this theory, I got hold of a polished and a natural and am going to be using them over the coming months as I test the various sidemount packages coming on to the market.

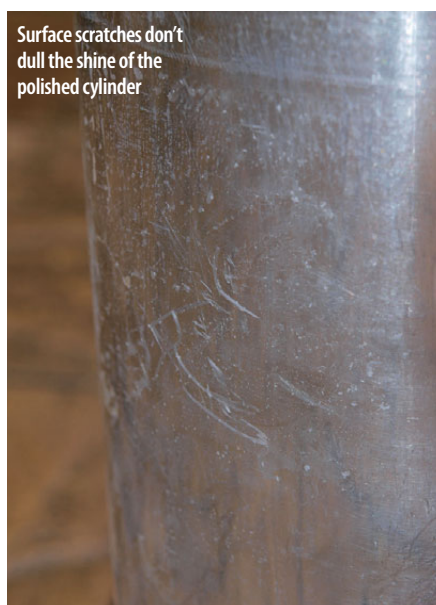
They have been dived for a few months already, and as you can see from the detail shot, although the polished has suffered some surface scratches, they have not dulled the finished in any way, and to my eyes at least it still looks far better than the natural finish.

The package deals at the prices quoted above come supplied complete with an M25X2 EN-144-3 DIN convertible cylinder valve. They are supplied cleaned for use with nitrox.

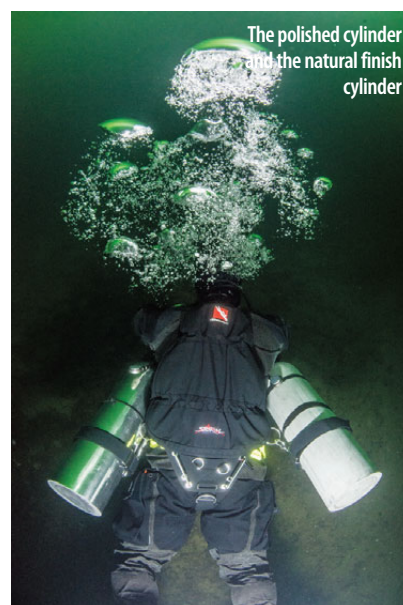
www.beaversports.co.uk



Mark testing the cylinders in Stoney Cove



Surface scratches don't dull the shine of the polished cylinder



The polished cylinder and the natural finish cylinder

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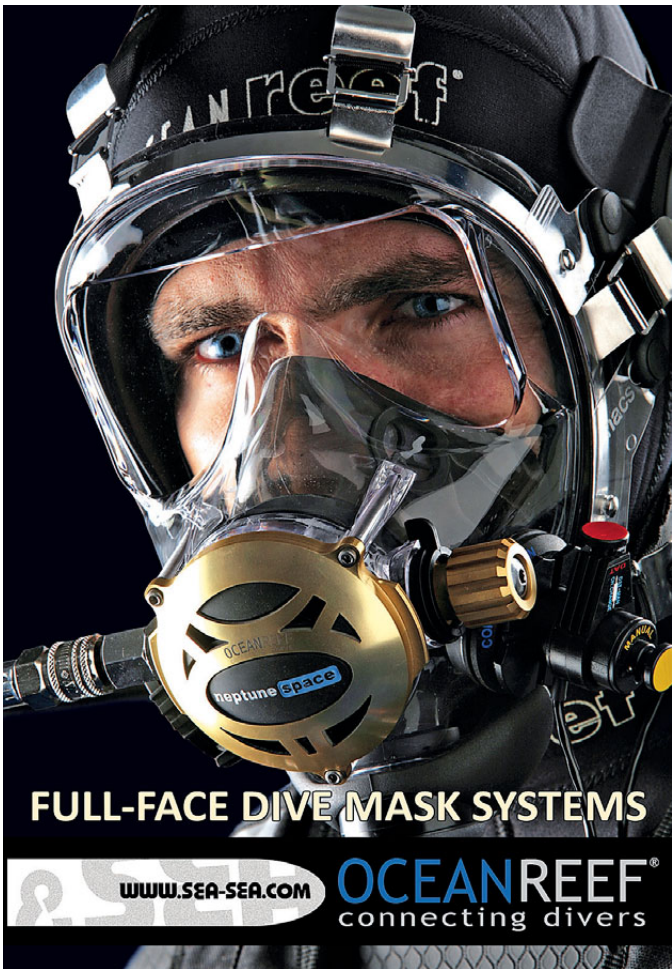
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What makes Halcyon different?

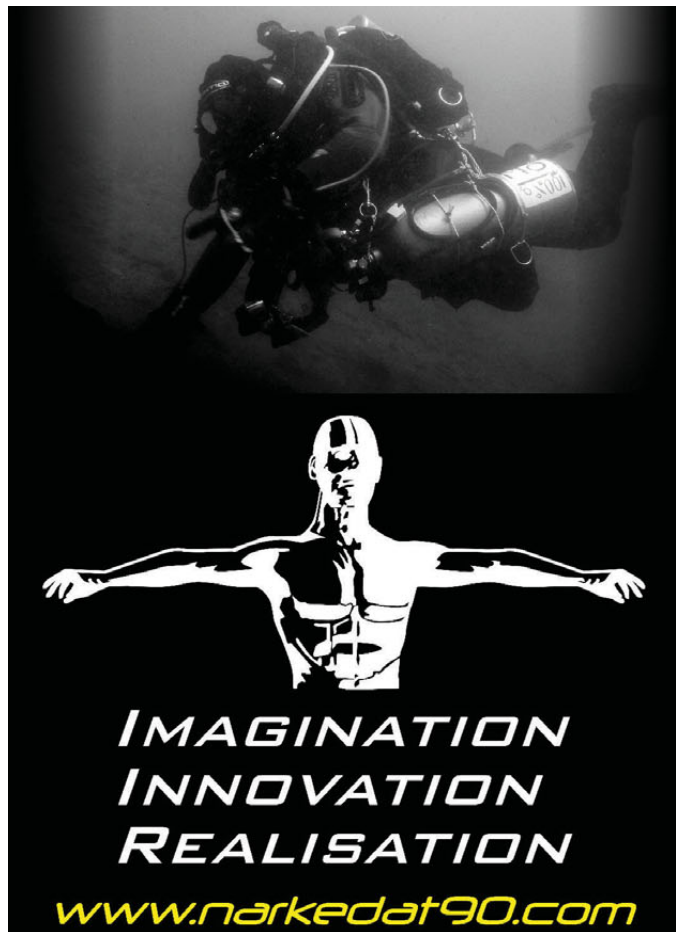
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Each issue, members of the Sport Diver Test Team report on a range of diving equipment being put through its paces on a six-month cycle of diving

Long-term test

Hollis Explorer Sport eSCR

NEW ARRIVAL

I was one of the first people outside of Hollis to get certified to dive the Explorer, and had been hankering to get back on one since doing the course way back in 2013. To coincide with me boosting my cert up to 40m, I arranged to get a unit on Long Term Test, and I have lined up ice-diving trips in Austria, wreck diving in Scapa Flow, as well as a few other bits and pieces, to take it on. My unit, soon to be fitted with the new harness straps, is also equipped with the optional CO2 sensor, so we can discuss how much difference that makes to its operation and safety.



INFORMATION

Date acquired	November 2014
Suggested retail price	£4,199
Number of dives	0
Time in water	0hrs 0mins

Mark Evans,
www.hollis.com

BARE HDC Tech Dry

The box with the drysuit in has arrived and first impressions are all good. A sturdy holdall, inflator hose, braces and (very small) bottle of zip slip are included. Unlike some manufacturers out there talking of flat seams, Bare join the seams then double them back on themselves before sealing them for a super-strength joint. The membrane appears to be very flexible yet tough, but I'll test its claims to strength later in the review. I'll also be testing the Bare base and mid-layer undersuits - apparently they are odour proof, Mrs H reckons my posterior will fully test that claim...



Dave Hope,
www.baresports.com

INFORMATION

Date acquired	October 2014
Suggested retail price	£1,699.15
Number of dives	0
Time in water	0hr 0mins

Exposure Sub M3

I have not used this torch for some time, so its unique operating style took some practice on the surface before using it again in the water. Once you have got the hang of it, it becomes second nature and it really does perform, giving a surprising amount of light for such a small unit that easily fits in a BCD pocket. It is the perfect primary dive torch for Caribbean diving, which is why it came with me to Grenada.



INFORMATION

Date acquired	April 2014
Suggested retail price	£374.99
Number of dives	53
Time in water	51hr 40mins

Dave Hope,
www.use1.com/exposure-marine/diving-lights.com

Atomic Aquatics BladeFins

It was nice to get these back for a few more dives as I headed off to Grenada, I have missed them. As a long-time 'shorter' style of fin convert, I did not expect to like these as much as I do. They work with a traditional kick, a frog kick and even if you give a shallow fin kick, they really do provide some power in return for your effort. These are not cheap fins, but they deserve your consideration if you are after a pair that will work well in the UK and abroad and are built to give years of quality service.



INFORMATION

Date acquired	May 2014
Suggested retail price	£118.25
Number of dives	22
Time in water	21hr 30mins

Dave Hope,
www.atomicaquatics.co.uk

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Mark Evans,
www.aqualung.com/uk



INFORMATION

Date acquired	August 2014
Suggested retail price	£1,449
Number of dives	0
Time in water	0hr 0mins

Mares Hybrid Pro Tec

This is a great BCD, and I glad it has come to Grenada with me for a spot of warm-water testing. It is really comfortable, with no cylinder movement whatsoever due to the Mares' suspension system.

The dumps all fall nicely to hand and are very efficient, as is the power inflator.

The fold-out pocket is large enough for a DSMB and reel, while the other pocket 'bellows' out and is roomier than it looks. There are plenty of D-rings for clipping things on as well, so you will never run short of space.

I am going to enjoy diving this.

Dave Hope,
www.mares.com



INFORMATION

Date acquired	July 2014
Suggested retail price	£485
Number of dives	16
Time in water	15hr 50mins

Oceanic ZEO FDXi



The Oceanic ZEO has accompanied me and the wife to Grenada for two weeks of fun diving in the Caribbean. Thankfully, this is quite a lightweight unit, so it didn't take up too much of my luggage allowance.

So, first impressions. The flow adjuster actually makes a noticeable difference, unlike some brands. It gives a nice smooth breathe and the wide exhaust pushes virtually all the bubbles away from your mask even when stationary and upright, like when taking a photograph. I have noticed that if you breathe gently on the reg there is a little whistling noise as you finish inhaling.

Dave Hope,
www.oceanicuk.com

INFORMATION

Date acquired	September 2014
Suggested retail price	£429
Number of dives	8
Time in water	7hr 57mins

Light & Motion GoBe 500 Spot

END OF TERM



And that's that, the Light & Motion GoBe 500 Spot has come to the end of its stint in the Long Term Test line-up. Compact, robust and easy to operate even with the thickest of winter gloves, it is rechargeable, has multiple power settings and can use inter-changeable heads. Perfect as a dinky video light with a GoPro or Intova action video camera diving rig, the GoBe 500 Spot also proved itself to be a worthy consideration for a back-up torch, winning the coveted Choice award in our Group Test (see December 2014 issue).

Light & Motion have always made quality equipment, and the GoBe is no different - the feel is nice, and I like the ability to adapt it to your individual needs.

Mark Evans,
www.cpspartnership.co.uk

INFORMATION

Date acquired	March 2014
Suggested retail price	£180
Number of dives	18
Time in water	16hrs 25mins



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CRITTER HUNTING: CRINOIDS

In the first part of a new series, **DR RICHARD SMITH** offers advice on how to get started in the tricky business of 'critter hunting'

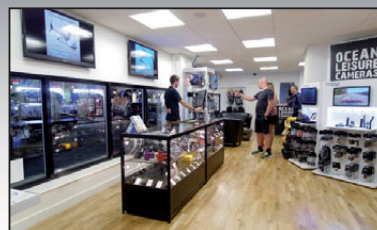
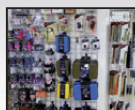
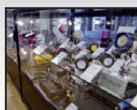
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Groups of crinoids often congregate around a prominent position on the reef



Even enlarged, an ornate ghost pipefish quickly becomes lost in an image with a crinoid

I am often asked how I manage to find such well-camouflaged creatures among the vast jumble of the coral reef. I don't use supernatural powers, or have particularly amazing eyesight, but I do have a practiced approach. I have found that knowing where certain creatures live, and the community that each microhabitat harbours, makes a huge difference to my success. In this new chapter of my series 'Get more from your underwater photography', each bi-monthly issue will focus on a different microhabitat. Each has its own assemblage of creatures you can expect to find there, and I will offer photographic tips specific to these animals, in addition to a little about their biology or behaviour which can be interesting to capture.

If you have ever wanted to find your own porcelain crab, clingfish, pygmy seahorse or hairy squat lobster, then this is the series for you. There is a definite sense of achievement from finding your very first critter, and once you've overcome that hurdle you'll start spotting creatures thick and fast. I have often found that seeing a picture of an animal alongside the habitat in which they're found gives the brain a subconscious frame of reference and helps with spotting. Spotting creatures for yourself also helps with photography: there is often just a brief window when an animal is in the perfect location for an image, so being the first to spot it gives you a better chance of getting 'the shot'. Over the course of the 'Critter Hunting' chapter, I will introduce the organisms associated with many of the reef's most species-rich microhabitats, including soft corals, algae and whip corals, so you can be the talk of the dive boat with your spotting abilities.

Crinoids

One of the best, and richest, places to start when critter hunting is the humble crinoid. These are one of the most critter-rich microhabitats on the reef and have a vast community of creatures that spend at least part of their life-cycle associated with them. Crinoids, also known as feather stars, are often confused with plants, but these are in fact animals, being one of the classes of echinoderms. They are the most primitive of the five living echinoderm classes, the others being sea stars, brittle stars, sea cucumbers and urchins, with their fossil record stretching back 400 million years. The word crinoid comes from the Greek, meaning 'lily form', as many of the deep-sea species retain a long stalk giving them a flower-like appearance. The unstalked species, of which there are around 500, are generally found in shallow water, including coral reefs.

Crinoids accommodate such a wide variety of symbiotic and commensal organisms because they offer two very important attributes of a home: protection, and a rich food source. They are filter feeders that crawl or swim to find locations with optimal current flow, which also benefits their residents. Some of the creatures that inhabit them are semi-parasitic, while others simply make the most of the rich food supply in the water around them. Like many of the reef's habitat-specific critters, those animals that live with crinoids tend to mimic the colour and pattern of their specific host; some also mimic the crinoids' filamentous growths, which helps to disrupt their outline. There are dozens of species associated with crinoids, but here I will share the



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most-common species and also some more noteworthy finds that are always worth looking out for.

Common crinoid-associated animals

Shrimps

There are more than 20 species of shrimps associated with crinoids. They range in size from about 1-3cm and are masters of camouflage.

Shrimps are generally found living along the crinoid's arms, rather than underneath or around the central body. Their colouration is often mottled, to match their host, which breaks up their outline even further making them quite hard to spot.

While they can often be found along the arms of the crinoid, they are easily spooked and will quickly move into the protective centre of the animal. Have all your camera settings and strobes ready before approaching to take a shot, to at least capture a couple of images before the animal disappears.

Squat lobster

There are several species of squat lobster that inhabit crinoids, but as a group they are much less diverse than crinoid shrimps. Most have dominant white stripes along the body, with the background colour varying to match the host.

Squat lobster are almost always located around the base of the crinoid, either between the stalked legs or around the calyx (the body of the crinoid). Their long straight pincer arms are often the first feature that draws attention to, and helps identify, these small crustaceans. Unlike shrimp, of which many individuals share one host, squat lobster tend to be found in mated pairs.

Sometimes the easiest squat lobster to photograph are the nocturnal species, which can be found on the red/orange crinoids that come out at dusk. These crinoids have a whole host of different species associated with them. Their posture and positioning on the reef can make it easier to photograph species that live around their base.



One of the biggest crinoid squat lobsters is the Baba's crinoid squat lobster, described in 2010

"It is impossible to photograph every animal you find living in a crinoid, but they generally aren't rare and it is always best to wait for a better opportunity to arise"



Squat lobster, such as this elegant squat lobster, can be identified by their long pincer-bearing forearms and pointed 'nose' or rostrum

Clingfish

Crinoid clingfish are some of the cutest creatures on the reefs, but photographing them takes some patience. They are quite active, moving around and interacting with each. Sometimes if there is no clear line of sight for a photograph, it's worth spending a little time watching their antics. On several occasions I have been watching a group and one has swum out of the safety of the crinoid and tried to sit on my hand or mask!

These tiny fish usually sit on the calyx. There are often two larger individuals, which are most likely the reproductive pair, and several smaller ones; however, the reproductive biology of these fish remains unknown.

To get a good shot usually requires that the arms of the crinoid are somewhat open, allowing a clear line of sight. Lighting can be tricky in this case too, so be sure to position your strobes according to gaps in the arms. Certain species of crinoid form tight balls when they close, excluding the clingfish from their usual home. This is a good opportunity to get a shot of the fish as it moves around the exterior surface of the crinoid.

Noteworthy finds

Crabs

There are several species of crinoid crabs, but all are relatively uncommon. They can be distinguished from squat lobster by the blunt, rather than pointed, front of the carapace, and short bent arms. Many species are nocturnal and can be relatively large compared to the size of the crinoid, making them easy to spot.

Ornate Ghost Pipefish

These are one of the most-beautiful fishes that associate with crinoids. Their surface texture perfectly matches the filaments on the crinoid arms, but they can be found in other habitats too. The difficulty with photographing them near a crinoid is that they can easily become lost in the image, as their camouflage is so perfect.



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Crinoid cuttlefish are small cephalopods, which are often found in pairs not far from crinoids

Crinoid cuttlefish

These small cephalopods are only loosely associated with crinoids, but can often be found hiding among their fronds. The cuttlefish are red and white when strobe-lit but, since the water column attenuates red light, they usually appear black and white to the naked eye.

Juvenile batavia batfish

Like several other juvenile fishes, batavia batfish associate with crinoids for camouflage only during their juvenile stage. They have a striking black and white pattern, and filamented fin tips, that break up their outline and provide a perfect camouflage. They slowly lose this colouration as they mature eventually becoming the more-familiar large disk-shaped fish.

Rhinopias

The rare lacy scorpionfish, *Rhinopias aphanes*, is found only in the Coral Sea area of the Great Barrier Reef, southeast Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. Unlike the closely related weedy rhinopias, which inhabits muck dives across the Indo-Pacific, the lacy lives on rich coral reefs, where it mimics crinoids. Unlike all other species, the lacy pretends to be an entire crinoid and, as an ambush predator, devours fishes that approach too closely when seeking refuge.

Photographing crinoid-associated fauna

Unfortunately, there is a tendency for guides and photographers to manipulate crinoids to get better images. I think it's worth noting that none of the animals in this article, or series in fact, were touched, manipulated or harassed in any way. Pointer sticks can easily damage and break the fragile arms of crinoids and should only ever be used to steady oneself on a dead patch of reef. Touching crinoids also initiates movement in the arms, making it very hard to get shots unless the animal is ruthlessly restrained. It is impossible to photograph every animal you find living in a crinoid, but they generally aren't rare and it is always best to wait for a better opportunity to arise. On the whole, I have found that nocturnal crinoids allow better chances to photograph their associated fauna than diurnal species, but are often overlooked. ■

"I think it's worth noting that none of the animals in this article, or series in fact, were touched, manipulated or harassed in any way"



Double-striped clingfish often move around the outside of their host when it forms a tight ball



Nocturnal crinoids accommodate many of the same creatures as their diurnal relatives, including double-striped clingfish and undescribed squat lobster

BIOGRAPHY

Richard Smith is a British marine biologist and photojournalist who aims to inspire a passion for the ocean and raise awareness of marine conservation issues through his images. He has been diving since 1996, which began his fascination with the sea. In 2011, he completed the first PhD on the biology and conservation of pygmy seahorses. Richard leads marine life expeditions where the aim is for participants to get more from their diving and photography by learning about the marine environment.
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Compare the effect of lighting on the photos of the scorpion fish. Without light you lose the stunning detail of the underwater realm; so lighting is essential for the enhancement of the natural colours. Better lighting can be achieved via the use of a strobe (flash-gun) or a video light (constant light source), or by getting closer to your subject. Strobes replicate the flash of your camera in a single burst of white

light. A constant light source allows the user to switch between stills and video with minimum fuss, and also eliminates backscatter (where flash guns can reflect off particles in the water obscuring the picture and subject).

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Image taken with flash



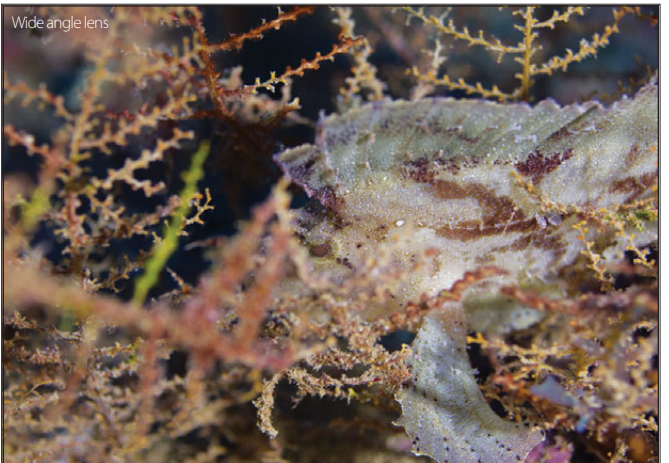
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Wide angle lens



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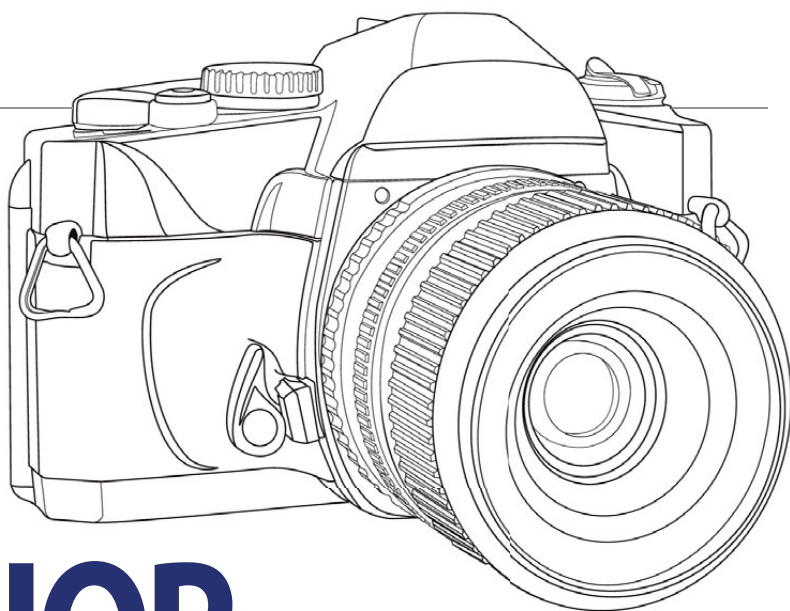


PHOTO WORKSHOP

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Martin Edge begins a new charge to photograph subjects differently after a critique session at the Dive 2015 show

Photographs by MARTIN EDGE

I'm sat at home writing this article, three days after the NEC Dive Show in Birmingham. During the weekend I had time to sit with underwater photographer Alison Moody to critique and review some of her work. Alison had recently returned from a photo trip to Lembeh and was keen to receive some feedback. She was particularly frustrated with a number of opportunities she'd had with Coleman shrimps in fire urchins. The majority of her efforts looked good to me and I had little to criticise. Throughout her entire collection, her work was strong, but the Coleman shrimps were playing on her mind and after some discussion she asked me a very pertinent question: "How can I make them look different than everyone else? They all look so similar!" She was right; Coleman shrimps in fire urchins do look very much the same and I had no alternative than to agree. I'd never considered this before and it got me thinking. I left the dive show eager to look at my own attempts on these subjects once I got home. My first port of call was Google Images, with the 'search flag' of Coleman shrimps. You guessed it! The vast majority of examples were all so very much alike, page after page. I looked back in my own Lightroom database of images and pulled out several photo opportunities of Coleman shrimps in fire urchins taken in Bali, Manado and Komodo. I was not surprised to find them all very similar. However, during my Lembeh workshop last year, I photographed these critters differently by using a snoot to restrict flash illumination coverage.

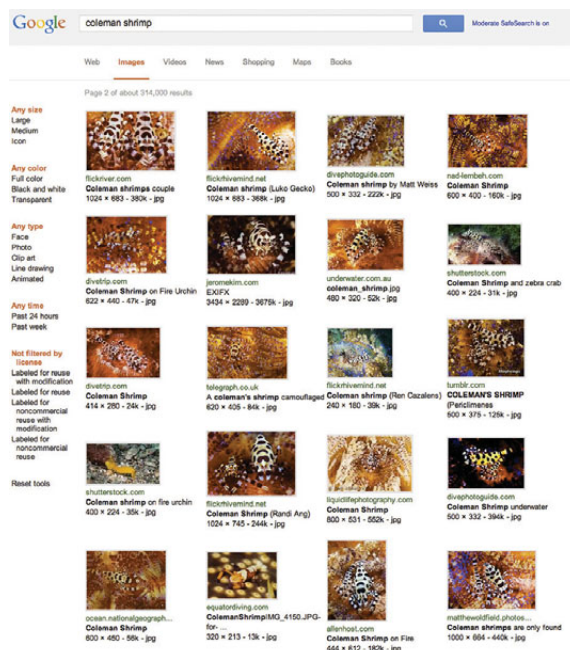


FIG 1: A random page example of a Google Image search for 'Coleman shrimp'. This page and many more are so similar to each other.

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FIG 2: Taken using a Nikon D7000 SLR in a Nauticam housing with a Nikon 105mm macro lens at its highest magnification. Aperture was F22 at 1/320th sec shutter speed, ISO 200. One LSD prime snoot on an Inon 240 flashgun.
COLEMAN SHRIMP: Found usually in pairs exclusively on the fire urchin – *Asthenosoma varium* – which in turn is known as the toxic sea urchin. The larger one is the female. The host urchin's spines do not harm the shrimp, but they usually clear an area on the urchin where they perch. They feed on parasites, algae and plankton.
LENGTH: 2cm. **DEPTH:** 5m–30m.

This month's image has made me think about the style and similarity of my own work and will motivate me to experiment to produce contemporary subjects in a different way. I'm guilty of shooting the familiar without a thought of considering an alternative approach. I used my snoot in Lembeh because it

was a new make and model, which I was eager to trial. I gave little thought to the creative process of making a popular subject (the Coleman's) a little bit different. It was all about the snoot and little about the subject. This is work in progress and I still have to consider how to make them distinctive. ■

MARTIN EDGE

PROFILE

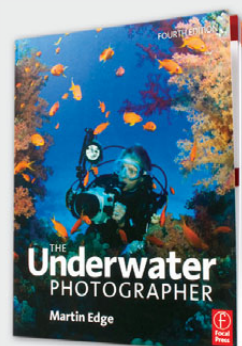
Martin Edge was born in Staffordshire, England in 1955, where he grew up without any inclination towards diving or photography.



Years later, he moved to the Dorset coastline and in 1977 it was here that he learnt to dive. He had never had any particular interest or tuition in photography, but his desire to shoot pictures underwater grew into a passion bordering on an obsession. Over the last 20 years he has introduced, developed, motivated and mentored hundreds of underwater photographers.

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The fourth edition of Martin's book, *The Underwater Photographer*, is now available.



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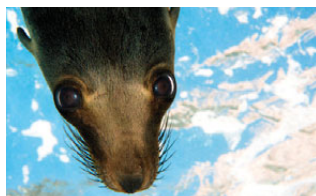


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The 2015 calendar is the sixth edition of the highly popular production and it presents a beautiful reminder of the marine life at risk from overfishing, pollution and rises in ocean temperatures. Campaign director at Bite-Back, Graham Buckingham, said: "It's very exciting to have the support and friendship of so many talented photographers. Their stunning images are a window on the beautiful yet fragile underwater world."

Sales of the calendar are a financial lifeline for the small charity and all profits will help fund its 'Hacked Off' campaign to eliminate shark fin soup in British restaurants.

The A4 calendar makes an ideal Christmas gift for a shark fan, scuba diver or wildlife enthusiast. It costs just £8.99 from www.bite-back.com and can be shipped anywhere in the world.

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Juvenile Grey Seal, by Mark Harris

This picture was taken during a recent trip to the Farne Islands. It was the first dive of the first day and the seals were being just a little shy and just keeping their distance, however just as we were preparing to end the dive and ascend, this little fella turned up, and even though he was nervous curiosity got the better of him and he allowed me to get close enough to snap a few shots before disappearing into the distance.

Picture taken with a Sony RX100 with a UWL-04 Fisheye lens in a Nauticam housing using ambient light at about 6m.

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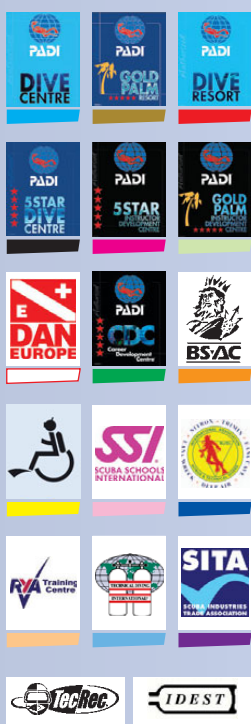


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OST.....Onsite testing
BS.....Testing to British Standards

OVERSEAS ABBREVIATIONS

ACC.....Accommodation
AIP.....All inclusive package
AT.....Airport transfers
AYRD.....All year round diving
BH.....Boat hire
CAOS.....Compressed are onsite
CH.....Car hire
EA.....Environment activities
EH.....Equipment hire
ESI.....English speaking instructors
FCF.....Families catered for
LB.....Liveaboards
NDCF.....Non-divers catered for
OWs.....Other watersports
TD.....Tech diving
UWP.....Underwater photography

ENGLAND

BERKSHIRE DIVESTYLE

DIVESTYLE Unit A, Bridge Farm, Reading Road, Arborfield, Berkshire, RG2 9HT
Tel: 0118 976 1729
Fax: 0118 926 9616
Email: info@divestyle.co.uk
Website: www.divestyle.co.uk
Opening Hours: M, T, T, F 10:00-18:00 W 10:00-20:00 S 10:00 - 17:00. Air To 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC. Nitrox, National Geographic. EH, ESI, TD, EA, FCF, AYRD. PADI IDC centre, Nitrox, Trimix, equipment retail, PADI, SSI, BSAC, EFR, DSAT, TDI, rebreather friendly, Family friendly, child friendly, kids parties (4 weeks notice).

CORNWALL KENNACK DIVING

Sea Acres Holiday Park, Kennack Sands, Helston, Cornwall TR12 7LT
Tel: 07816 903260
Email: mail@kennackdiving.co.uk
Website: www.kennackdiving.co.uk
Opening Hours: 09.00-1800
Air to 232 Bar. PADI 5★ Dive Resort. EH, AYRD, UWP, CAOS. PADI Courses from Bubblemaker to Assistant Instructor, specialties & guided dives all with friendly local Instructors. Equipment Hire, Heated indoor pool, on site, accommodation available.

DERBYSHIRE CHESTERFIELD ADVENTURE CENTRE

Wheatbridge Road, Off DockWall, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 2AB
Tel: 01246 245408
Email: info@divenut.co.uk
Website: www.divenut.co.uk
Opening hours: Tues-Sat 10am-6pm Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC, OSS, BS, EH. Full range of courses from beginner to instructor. Equipment sales, dive club, group holidays. Nitrox, Poseidon rebreather sales & training. Easy parking. 3 pool nights.

DEVON DIVERS DOWN

139 Babbacombe Road, Babbacombe, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 3SR
Tel: 01803 327111
Fax: 01803 314728
Email: info@diversdown.co.uk
Website: www.diversdown.co.uk
PADI 5★ IDC Centre SSI, OSS, BS, EH, ES, CAOS, Nitrox. Active dive club, escorted dives, boat trips organised. Courses from beginner to instructor. Open 7 days a week.

LOOKING TO ADVERTISE YOUR DIVE CENTRE?

T. +44 (0) 118 974 2502
E. sam.wren@sportdiver.co.uk

DORSET DIVERS DOWN SWANAGE

The Pier, High Street, Swanage, Dorset BH19 2AR
Tel: 07977 142661 / 01929 423565 (April to October)
Email: medina@madafish.com
Website: www.diversdownswanage.co.uk

Opening hours: 9.00 - 17.00 weekends & most days in summer season.
Air to 260 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC EH, ESI, TD, UWP, CAOS Nitrox. Three charter dive catamarans all with rear diver lifts, shore diving equipment, hire shop, diver courses, air nitrox, parking. All on Swanage pier. Established 1958.

ESSEX DIVERSE SCUBA

Ye Olde Plough House Motel, Brentwood Road, Bulphan, Essex, RM14 3SR
Tel/Fax: 01375 892444
Mob: 07814 570165
Email: jeanne-marie@diverse-scuba.co.uk
Website: www.diverse-scuba.co.uk
Opening Hours: Mon-Thurs 2pm-10pm. Sat & Sun 10:30am-5pm (Closed Fri). Our own On Site Pool, Air to 300 Bar, PADI 5★ IDC. OSS, EH, On Site Pool FCF, Acc, Restaurant facilities. Complete range of PADI courses available, from Discover Scuba through to Instructor, with resident course director, Full range of specialties, classroom. Dive shop. Social events and holidays.

HAMPSHIRE ANDARK DIVING AND WATERSPORTS

256 Bridge Road, Lower Swanwick, Southampton SO31 7FL
Tel: 01489 581755
Fax: 01489 575223
Email: bookings@andark.co.uk
Website: www.andark.co.uk
Andark Lake Tel: 01489 885811
Email: lake@andark.co.uk
Opening Hours: Mon/Thu and Sat 9am To 6 pm, Fri 9am To 8pm, Sun 9:30 to 5pm
NITROX/TRIMIX. Onsite pool and classrooms. Fully equipped friendly shop. Online sales. Powerboat courses. Underwater escape training. Holidays. Andark lake. Kids Parties. Activity Club. Onsite Servicing. Commercial diving Courses. Parking PADI 5★ IDC. BSAC Premier Centre. RYA Centre. HSE Commercial Diver Training and First Aid Centre EH. LB. ESI. TD. EA. AIP. FCF. AYRD. UWP. NDCF. CAOS

KENT BLUE OCEAN DIVING

West Park Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 7AF (NEXT TO MOAT PARK LEISURE CENTRE)
Tel: 01622 212 022
Email: scuba@blueoceandiving.co.uk
Website: www.blueoceandiving.co.uk
Opening Hours: ***FREE TRY DIVES EVERYWEEK*** TUES-SUN 10-6pm. LATE 8pm TUES & THURS. PADI 5★ Instructor Development Centre. National Geographic Dive Centre. Scubaolics Dive Club. FREE MEMBERSHIP. UK Diving, Social events & Holiday Trips every month. Servicing, Testing, Spares and Repairs. Workshop on site. 300bar Air/Nitrox. Large Shop Free Parking. 20+ Speciality Courses incl Rebreathers, DPV & TECDEEP. PADI Instructor Career Development Course (CDC). AI + OWSI + EFR1 + 20x SPEC INST + DSAT ITC.

DIVE MACHINE

Unit 11 Orchard Business Centre, SandersonWay, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1QF
Tel: 01732 773553
Fax: 01732 773663
Website: www.divemachine.com
Email: robert@divemachine.com
Opening Hours: Mon-Sat 09.30-17.30, Weds 09.30-19.00. Air to 300 bar, nitrox, trimix, idest. PADI CDC, PADI Courses from beginner to instructor. IANTD, Nitrox. Specialities: Enriched air, Dry suit, Photographer, Deep, Night, Underwater

navigator, wreck, Oxygen first aid, DAN O2, Boat, Equipment and Drift. Authorised dealer for most leading mfrs. Large display area. Classrooms. Large free car park. Professional, friendly service & advice. Regulator Services. Suit repairs. Holidays abroad and in the UK.

LONDON AQUANAUT SCUBA & SNORKELLING CENTRE

34 Coombe Road, Kingston Upon Thames, Surrey, KT2 7AG
Tel: 0208 546 8882
Email: info@aquanautscuba.co.uk
Website: www.aquanautscuba.co.uk
Opening Hours: Monday - 11am-6pm, Tuesday - 11am-6pm, Wednesday - 11am-6pm, Thursday - 11am - 7pm, Friday - 11am-6pm, Saturday - 10am - 6pm, Sunday - by appointment. Nitrox & Air to 300bar, 5★ IDC Centre / IDEST and BSAC Centre. SITA member. OSS OST BS CAOS EH TD. Courses from beginner to instructor, Fully stocked dive shop with excellent purchasing advice, Friendly and very active dive club with UK and overseas trips and social.

MIDDLESEX G & H DIVING SERVICES LTD

Unit 1, Willow House, River Gardens, N Feltham Trading Estate, TW14 0RD.
Tel: 020 8751 3771 / 020 8890 3302
Fax: 020 8751 2591
E-mail: gerryhassel@gheng.com
Website: Under construction
Opening Hours: 8.30 - 5.30 Mon to Friday. 8.30 - 12 noon Sat. Air to 300 Bar. BSAC, TDI, SSI & PSA. EH, TD, CAOS. Cylinder testing IDEST 2v, Regulator servicing, Air, Nitrox, Trimix, TDI Technical courses. Suit repairs.

SUSSEX OCEAN VIEW DIVING SERVICES LTD

160 South Street, Lancing, West Sussex BN15 8AU.
Tel: 01903 767224
Fax: 01903 754361
Email: info@oceanviewdiving.co.uk
Website: www.oceanviewdiving.co.uk
PADI 5★ IDC Centre. IANTD, TDI. OSS, OST, EH, BS. Air to 300 Bar, Nitrox. Padi Tec Rec. Tri-mix. Mail order, suit repairs, holidays abroad, on-site indoor pool. Licenced bar and club. Largest selection of equipment in Sussex.

YORKSHIRE THE DIVERS WAREHOUSE

911 Wakefield Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 7QA
Tel: 01274-307555
Email: sales@diverswarehouse.co.uk
Website: www.diverswarehouse.co.uk
Opening Hours: 8:30 - 17:30 Mon - Fri, Thursday 8:30 - 19:00, Saturday 8:30 - 17:00, Sunday 10:00 - 16:00 PADI 5★ Centre - Pool sessions Shipley Pool Wednesdays 18:30 - 20:30 Servicing, Cylinder Testing (Idest Approved), Equipment Hire, Large Equipped Shop with changing facilities, classroom, online sales, large parking area, PADI courses, equipment from snorkelling to Technical diving

THE DIVER TRAINING COLLEGE

Malt Kiln Lane, Appleton Roebuck, York, North Yorkshire YO23 7DT
Tel: 01904 744424 / 07967 742420
Fax: 01904 744724
Email: ops@cdms-diving.co.uk
Website: www.dtc-diving.co.uk
Opening hours: 9.00am-5.00pm Mon-Sat. Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ Centre, OSS-OST-BS-Nitrox. Full range of PADI specialties, RYA courses and specialist commercial diving courses. Full range of equipment sales from our well stocked dive shop. Open Mon-Sat.

ROBIN HOOD DIVE SCHOOL

152 Leeds Road, Heckmondwike,
West Yorkshire

WF16 9BJ

Tel: 01924 444888

Fax: 01924 474529

E-mail: Dive@Roho.co.uk

Website: www.Roho.co.uk

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 9.15- 6.00.

Late night Thurs till 8.00.Sat 9.15-5.00.OSS,OST, BS, IDEST, EH, Nitrox. PADI Dive Centre, BSAC Premier level. Training in our on-site heated pool and lecture rooms. Home of the renowned ROHO drysuits. Nitrox courses & fills. Gigantic 5000sq ft showroom fully stocked with dive watersports & snowboarding equipment. Friendly, helpful staff and instructors. Equipment hire.



SCOTLAND

BERWICKSHIRE

AQUASTARS DIVE CENTRE

New Harbour Buildings, Guns Green Basin,
Eyemouth,

Berwickshire,

Scotland. TD14 5SD

Tel: 018907 50904

Mob: 07886 314008

Email: info@aquastars.co.uk

Website: www.aquastars.co.uk

Opening Hours: 9am-5pm.

Air to 300 Bar. PADI School. SITA, OST, OSS, BS, EH. Guided dives, 10 metre rib, boat charter, shop, hot showers, holiday packages arranged.



IRELAND

CO CORK

OCEANADDICTS

Kinsale, Co.

Cork, Ireland

Tel: 00353 (0)87-7903211

Email: anne@oceanaddicts.ie

Website: www.oceanaddicts.ie

Opening Hours: 9.00am to 6.00pm. Air to 300, PADI Resort, DAN, LB, ESI, ACC, AT, UWP, NDCf, CAOS, Nitrox. Liveboard and day-boat diving, groups and individuals welcome, friendly atmosphere, wrecks and reefs, great photo opportunities, courses available, live the adventure on Ireland's South Coast.



CO DONEGAL

MEVAGH DIVE CENTRE LTD

Milford Road,

Carriagh,

Letterkenney,

Co. Donegal, Ireland

Tel: 00353 749154708

Mob: 00353 8765 90264

Email: reception@mevaghdive.com

Website: www.mevaghdive.com

Opening Hours: 9am to 6pm. Air to 300 Bar, PADI 5★ Dive Centre, EH, ESI, TD, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCf, CAOS, Nitrox, Tri Mix. Mevagh Dive Centre is Donegal's only dive centre and Ireland's largest all under one roof. With diving equipment, sales, hire, servicing, cylinder testing and our state of the art swimming pool.



CO GALWAY

SCUBADIVE WEST

Lettergesh, Renvyle,

Co Galway,

Tel: 00 353 9543922

Email: info@scubadivewest.com

Website: www.scubadivewest.com

Opening Hours: 09.00 till 18.00 (closed Tuesday)

Air to 300 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AYRD, UWP, CAOS. NITROX, National Geographic. Dive Centre ideally situated on the waterfront. 2 day Island boat safaris, daily boat & shore dives, all courses from DSD to instructor level, snorkelling.



NORTHERN IRELAND

COUNTY DOWN

DV DIVING

138 Mount Steward Road, Newtownards,
Co. Down, BT22 2ES.

Tel: 02891 464671/861686

Fax: 02891 464671

Email: info@dvdviving.co.uk

Website: www.dvdviving.co.uk

OSS, OST, BS, EH. DV Diving offer one of Europe's most comprehensive ranges of scuba, technical & commercial diving and powerboat training courses - for the complete beginner through to instructor development for the most experienced professionals



PORTSTEWART

AQUAHOLICS DIVE CENTRE

14 Portmore Road, Portstewart

Tel: 28 70832584

Email: dive@aquaholics.org

Website: www.aquaholics.org

Opening Hours: 9am to 5pm. Air to 300 Bar.

PADI 5★ CENTRE. NITROX, TRIMIX. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, ACC, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCf, CAOS. Offering the full range of courses from Beginner to Trimix. Diving the spectacular clear water of the North Coast from Rathlin Island to Malin Head.



OVERSEAS DIVE CENTRE

BERMUDA

DIVE BERMUDA

The Southampton Fairmont Hotel, 101

South Shore Road, Southampton, SN021

Tel: 1(441)238-2332

Email: crew@bermudascuba.com

Web: www.bermudascuba.com

Opening Hours: 08:00-17:00

Air to 200 bar. PADI 5★ IDC. ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, UWP, NDCf, CAOS, DBDA, National Geographic. Bermuda's only 5★ IDC! All dives guided by experienced instructors. Dive and snorkel trips daily. Full hotel facilities available on site. Kayaks and paddleboards rental available.



CAYMAN ISLANDS

SUNSET HOUSE - GRAND CAYMAN'S HOTEL FOR DIVERS BY DIVERS

390 South Church Street

PO Box 479GT

Tel: 1-345-949-7111

Fax: 1-345-949-7101

Email: reservations@sunsethouse.com

Website: www.sunsethouse.com

Opening Hours: 7:00 - 17:30

(Dive Centre Hours)

Air To 200 Bar. Stingray City and ex-USS Kittiwake Adventures. PADI 5★ IDC. Full-Service dive operations located at Sunset House. Recreational boat dives. Incredible shore diving. Nitrox. Cathy Church. U/W photo centre. 53 Rooms for accommodations. Bar, restaurant onsite. EH, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT (with packages), ATRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCf, CAOS (with packages)



CYPRUS

CYDIVE DIVE CYPRUS

20, Myrra Complex 33, Poseidonos Ave 1,

Paphos 8042, Cyprus.

Tel: 00 357 26 934271

Email: info@cydive.com

Website: www.cydive.com

PADI. The First PADI 5★ Career Development Centre & Centre of Excellence in Cyprus. CAOS, EH, CH, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCf. Fantastic Location, an exciting programme with 2 Boat Dives & Daytrips Daily. Instructor programmes 4 times a year.



LARNACA DIVE-IN

HTTC Ltd (Hyperbaric Therapy Treatment
Centre) Poseidonia Medical Centre 47a
Eleftherias Avenue, Aradippou, Larnaca,
CYPRUS 7102

Tel: 00357 24 252501/24 hr Emergency

Diver Help Line 99 518837

Fax: 00357 24 252502

Email: info@hbocypus.com

Website: www.hbocypus.com

Opening Hours: 9-5 Mon -Sat.

24/7 Emergency Diver Response. Air to 232 Bar.

If you are concerned or feel that you have unusual

signs or symptoms after a dive please always get it

checked. We have a 24/7, 365 days service with a

full Hyperbaric Medical team on standby at our 14~

Man fully computerized, HAUX 2200 Starmed Unit.

We are the Preferred Provider for IDAN, UK Armed

Forces, US Armed Forces, NATO and many more. We

offer Direct Insurance billing for all treatments. Also

Dry Dives to 40 metres, PADI Chamber Specialty

Courses, DAN In-Chamber Tender Courses, DAN

Chamber Operator Courses, DAN Consumer and

Instructor Courses to all Levels.



SCUBA MONKEY LTD

36c Ayias Mavris

Tel: 35723724622

Email:

dive@scuba-monkey.com

Website: www.scuba-monkey.com

Opening Hours: 8.30 am - 7pm (or later)

Air to 300 Bar. PADI Dive Resort. EH, ESI, EA, AIP, ACC

FCF, UWP, CH, NDCf, CAOS. Nitrox. Retail,

photography. Non diver to professional. U/W Naturalist.

Scooter DPV. Underwater Weddings. Education. DPV.

Videography. Intern Program. Fish Identification.

Multilevel Diver. Wreck, freediving, search and recovery.

Equipment Specialists. Underwater Navigation. Deep,

night and boat diving. Project aware.



EGYPT

AQUARIUS DIVING CLUB

Coral Sea,

Waterworld Nabq Bay,

Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: (+20) 01001232785

Email: info@aquariusredsea.com

Website: www.aquariusredsea.com

Opening Hours: 09:00 - 17:00

Air to 200 Bar. PADI 5★ EH, LB, ESI, EA, ACC,

FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCf, CAOS. Dive

centre's in Sharm el Sheikh, Hurghada, Marsa

Alam, Hamata, Makadi & Sahl Hashish. Diving for

complete beginners to experienced divers.

Diving trips from shore, daily boat, zodiac and

liveaboards.



CAMEL DIVE CLUB & HOTEL

Centre of Na'ama Bay, PO Box 10, Sharm

El Sheikh, South Sinai, Egypt.

Tel: +20 69 3600 700

Fax: +20 69 3600 601

Email: info@cameldive.com

Website: www.cameldive.com

PADI 5★ Gold Palm IDC Centre, BSAC, Acc. AT, LB,

ESI, EA, BH, AYRD, UWP, OW, NDCf, TD, CAOS, EH,

FCF. The Red Seas friendliest diver hotel and dive

centre. Join us for spectacular diving and the best

apres dive in Sharm. Established 1986



CORAL SEA WATERWORLD

PO Box 317,

Sharm El Sheikh,

South Sinai, Egypt.

Tel: +2 069 3710500

Fax: +2 069 3710511

Email: waterworld@coralsearesorts.com

Website: www.coralsearesorts.com

EH, LB, ESI, EA, AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH,

BH, NDCf, CAOS. Nitrox. PADI 5★. When it's time

to plan your next family vacation, choose Coral Sea

Waterworld Resort and experience the newest

water park in Nabq Bay, Sharm El Sheikh.



EAGLE DIVERS

Based in Ocean Club Hotel,

23 City Council Street,

Hadaba,

Sharm el Sheikh

Tel: 002 01200001590

Email: info@eagle-divers.com

Website: www.eagle-divers.com

Opening Hours: 8.00am - 8.00pm

PADI Dive Centre. Nitrox. Air to 220 Bar. EH, LB,

ESI, TD, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCf,

CAOS. Offering personalised and professional

service to all levels of diver. Eagle Divers will

endeavour to give the best experience possible,

every dive.



ELITE DIVING'S DIVERS UNITED

Uni Sharm Hotel,

Sharm Elshees Street

Um El Sid Hill,

Hadaba,

Sharm El Sheikh

Tel: 0020 1224 308 780

Email: info@elite-diving.com

Web: www.elite-diving.com

Opening Hours: 8.00am to 19.00pm

Air to 220 Bar. Divers United PADI 5 Resort. Elite

Diving. BSAC Diver Training Centre. EH, LB, ESI, EA,

AIP, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCf, CAOS.

NITROX, ATOL Bonded through UK Tour operator.

British Owner managers, offering Daily Boat Diving

on some of the best reefs in the world, House

reef, PADI & BSAC courses, Liveaboards, Special

excursions.



ILIOS DIVE CLUB

Steigenberger Al Dau Resort,

Hurghada,

Red Sea, Egypt

Tel: 0020 65 346 5442

Email: info@iliosdiveclub.com

Website: www.iliosdiveclub.com

Opening Hours: 8am - 5pm

Air to 200 Bar, Nitrox, Padi Course up to

DiveMaster, Handicapped diving, Sn

OVERSEAS DIVE CENTRES

SINAI COLLEGE

Sinai College,
Sharm Inn Amarin,
Sharm El Sheikh,
South Sinai, Egypt
Tel: (+20) 01154055100
Email: info@sinai-college.com
Website: www.sinai-college.com
Opening hours: 7.45am - 6.30pm, 7 days a week. Air to 200 Bar. EH, LB, ESI, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, NDCf, COAS. Nitrox, PADI Dive Centre. We are an European run and managed dive center based in Sharm El Sheikh with a friendly and professional atmosphere. We provide daily diving, mini safaris and liveboards.



SINAI DIVERS

Ghazala Hotel,
Sharm El Sheikh,
South Sinai,
Tel: 00 20 069 3600 697
Fax: 00 20 069 3600 158
Email: info@sinaidivers.com
Website: www.sinaidivers.com
Opening Hours: 08:00 - 20:00 summer/
08:00 - 18:30 winter. Air to 200 bar. EH, LB, ESI, TD, EA, Acc, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCf, FCF, CAOS, AT. Free Nitrox for Nitrox certified divers. NG. PADI 5 Gold Palm Resort. SSI, CMAS (Barakuda) CDC & TDI (Dahab). Easy house reef in the centre Naama Bay, safari boats, north & south. Full tec centre in Dahab, Resort & dive centre in Marsa Alam & Tabá.



FUERTEVENTURA

ABYSS

Calle Gravina, 10 Corralejo,
35660, Fuerteventura
Tel: (+34) 928949004
(+34) 652958297 or
(+34) 655678392
Email: info@abyssfuerteventura.com
Website: www.abyssfuerteventura.com
Opening Hours: 0900 - 1700 365 DAYS A YEAR
Air to 200. PADI Resort with Detherapy Education Pro Instructor. EH, ESI, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCf, CAOS, WIFI. Friendly & flexible family run centre. Small groups. Padi beginner to professional level. DSD and bubblemaker. Dive centre located in the town centre.



DEEP BLUE DIVING S.L

Barcelo el Castillo,
Caleta de Fuste,
Fuerteventura, 35610
Tel: +34 606 275 468 or
+34 928 163 172
Email: info@deep-blue-diving.com
Website: www.deep-blue-diving.com
Facebook: Deep.Blue.Diving.Fuerteventura
Opening Hours: All year 9am-5pm
Air to 200. PADI 5★ GOLD PALM IDC CENTRE & IE LOCATION. EH, ESI, AIP, ACC, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCf, CAOS. WIFI, Equipment Washing and Storage Rooms. Discover Scuba to Instructor. All year round, water front location, small groups, 20-25m visibility. Exclusive dive sites, after dive sector.



GREECE

CRETE UNDERWATER CENTER

Mirabello Beach Hotel, Agios Nikolaos
72100 Crete, Greece. PO Box 100
Tel/Fax: 00 30 284 1022 406
Mobile: 0030 6945 2444 34 /
0030 6944 1268 46
Email: info@creteunderwatercenter.com
Website: www.creteunderwatercenter.com
PADI Resort D.C., Day Boats/ Servicing/
Accommodation/ Technical/ IANTD/ PADI/BSAC
ResortCenter/Air/Nitrox/Trimix/KitonSale. Based within a hotel complex directly on the beach, we provide a great variety of diving services for Beginners through to Advanced and Technical Divers. As a well equipped resort and diving centre, we tailor packages to suit your individual or group needs.



NAVY'S WATERWORLD

Kamari Beach,
Santorini
Tel/Fax: 0030 22860 28190
Email: info@navyswaterworld.gr
Website: www.navyswaterworld.gr
Opening Hours: 8.00 - 22.00
Air to 200 Bar. EH, ESI, TD, EA, AIP, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, BH, NDCf, CAOS. Nitrox. PADI 5★ IDC Dive Center. Daily 2 tank trips around the volcanic shoreline of Santorini. Dive in the marine protected area, and enjoy the caves, wrecks, wall diving, reefs and more.



NERO-SPORT DIVING CENTER

Limni Keriu,
Zakynthos/ GR-29092
Tel: 0030 26950 28481
0030 698 5666645
0030 26950 49125
Email: info-diving@nero-sport.de
Website: www.nero-sport.com
Opening Hours: 9.00 - 18.00
Air to 200 Bar. PADI DIVE CENTRE, IAC 5★ EH, ESI, Acc, AT, FCF, AYRD, UWP, NDCf, CAOS. Free childcare. 2-5 trips a day. Day trips. Night diving. Own accommodation. Snack bar. Great family offers. Special group offers. Diving all year round.



HONDURAS

UTILA DIVE CENTRE/MANGO INN

Utila,
Bay Islands,
Honduras
Tel/Fax: 5044253327
Email: info@utiladivecentre.com
Website: www.utiladivecentre.com
www.goproutila.com
Opening Hours: 7am to 7pm
Air to 220 Bar. PADI Career Development Centre and IANTD facility. Nitrox, Trimix, Rebreather friendly, National Geographic Facility. EH, ESI, TD, EA, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CAOS. PADI certification courses from beginner to Instructor (monthly PADI IDC's) with diving packages and accommodation. The island of Utila offers spectacular Caribbean diving and Whale sharks.



IBIZA

PUNTA DIVE

Cala Martina,
Es Cana,
Santa Eulalia,
Ibiza,
Spain.
Tel: (0034) 971 33 67 26
(0034) 971 31 94 13
Email: info@puntadive.com
Website: www.puntadive.com
Opening Hours: 9:00 - 19:00.
Air to 225 Bar. PADI 5★ IDC. EH-ESI-EA-FCF-AT-UWP-CH-BH-NDCf-CAOS. 3 centres on Ibiza. Dive don Pedro, sunken fish farm, the cathedral etc. 2 fast RIB's. Group and club offers available. Fun, friendly and professional.



INDONESIA

AQUAMARINE DIVING - BALI

Jalan Petitenget 2A,
Kuta-Legian-Seminyak,
Bali 80361, Indonesia.
Tel: +62 361 4738 020
Fax: +62 361 4738 021
Email: info@aquamarinediving.com
Website: www.aquamarinediving.com
Opening Hours: 8:00-18:00
Air to 200 Bar. PADI 5★ Gold Palm Resort
6344. EH, Nitrox, ESI, EA, CAOS, Acc, FCF, AT, AYRD, UWP, CH, BH, NDCf. Bali's only British owner-operated dive company. Only offers Bali's better dive locations (wrecks, drifts, Mantas, shore, deep). Daily Trips and Customised Dive Packages. UWP Specialists.



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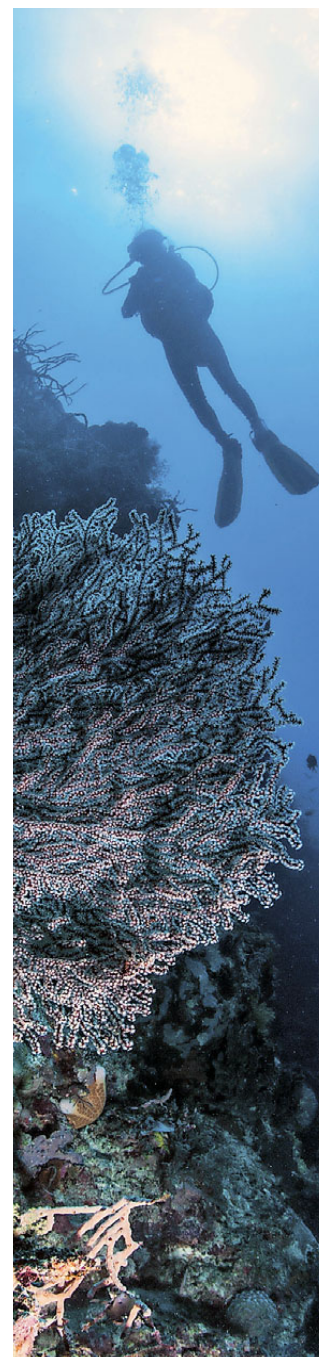
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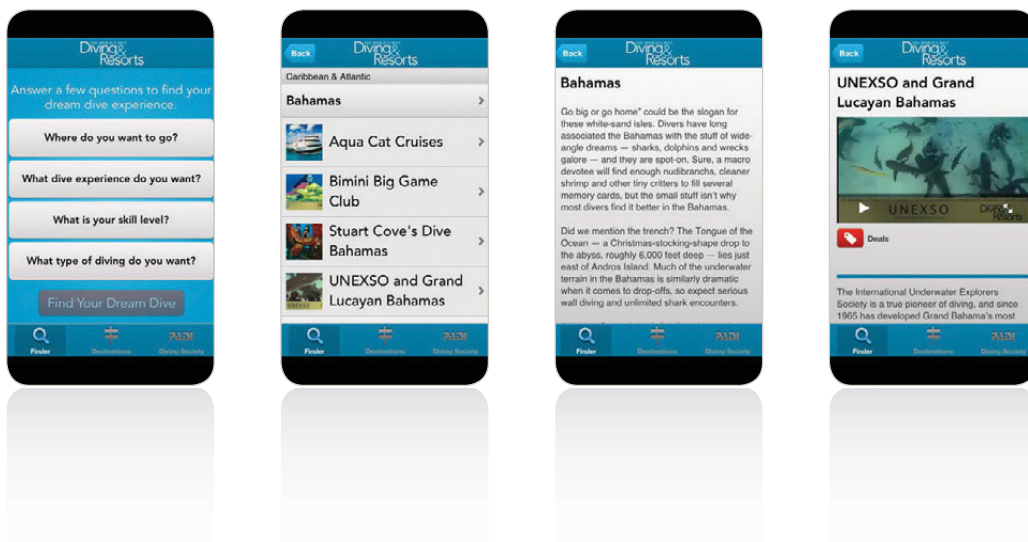


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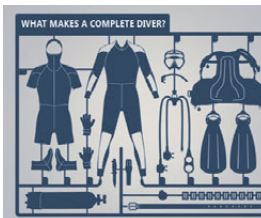
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Making plans for ice diving in Switzerland is fun as I've got all of the expected things under control: skis, sledges, skidoos, tents, chainsaws, shovels, ropes, drysuits and great scuba gear, of course. But winter in Switzerland comes with its evil partner - fondue. This stuff is full of mischief. Approaching the restaurant after a long cold day the smell of it is great - warm and welcoming, safe and full of promise. But then things immediately get complicated because instead of having a well-earned beer, or in Wisconsin we always had hot chocolate liberally laced with peppermint schnapps, you have to click into 'fondue survival mode', which means drinking only water, kirsch or herbal tea, otherwise the cheese will

and as the winds calmed down the sea became an undisciplined mess with big waves from all directions accompanied with the occasional huge standing whopper. There was no chance of anchoring and things were far worse when we tried the lee side of the rocks, so we held position in the centre of the islets and went for it. In those wild conditions we got the zodiacs away with the drop-cameras, the pelagic camera team, the science divers and the media boat with no problem at all - we just went to work. I love that feeling of being in totally wild conditions with a world-class team and just getting on with the job. I am often asked how do we know that an area is pristine and for me the most-obvious indicator is when I roll off the boat, the bub-

We just rolled around in the blue in a sort of mad dance. Remarkably the shark followed us to the zodiac so I got onboard, found the pliers while Manu got alongside the shark and we had another go at removing the hook, but again there was no chance as the hook was buried so deep and I couldn't cut the hook off with the pliers. Where are the bolt cutters when you need them?

It's heartbreaking to see these beautiful sharks with hooks. Only a very small number escape from the long-line hooks, so this means that the shark-fishing industry is doing very well in this area.

The waters of Rapa and Marotiri are well managed by the Rapan people with their traditional method called 'Rahui'. But with the

"Give me the chances of being lost under the ice, the bends from high-altitude diving or the back-breaking work of cutting through the ice rather than being host to a malodorous cheese alien any day!"

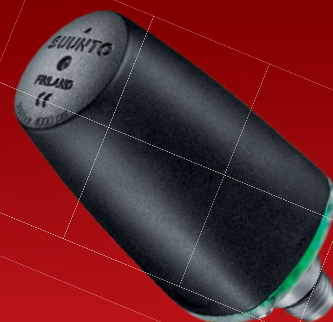
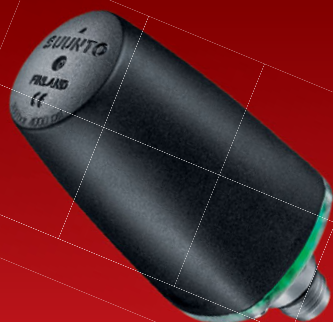
coagulate into a single heavy indigestible ball and lurk in your stomach leaving you feeling like a London sewer with a 'fatberg' problem. I thought this was folklore that could be ignored but you can take it from me that it's absolutely a true and miserable experience if you get this wrong. Give me the chances of being lost under the ice, the bends from high-altitude diving or the back-breaking work of cutting through the ice rather than being host to a malodorous cheese alien any day! These winter diving plans feel good as I am now writing the report and working on the follow up from the Rapa expedition, so naturally I'm treating myself to flicking through the images to evoke some memorable high points: We arrived at Marotiri after days of big winds

bles clear and I am surrounded by sharks. There is nothing like the realisation that I'm not at the top of the food chain. This is exactly what happened on the Marotiri dives - I rolled in and found myself among 40 or more beautiful Galapagos sharks with big amberjacks whizzing around among them and far off into the blue the hint of countless more sharks. Galapagos sharks like to get up close and personal, so each dive is a beautiful and powerful experience. A few minutes into the dive a shark with a huge long-line hook caught deep in its mouth and trailing the steel tracer came alongside me and just stayed there. We drifted together for most of the dive and as he was so relaxed our underwater cameraman Manu San Felix grabbed him and we had a go at removing the hook, but there was no chance.

increased pressure of foreign fishing fleets they are joining an Austral Islands Marine Protected Area network so that they can get international law on their side. It's a long and delicate process to navigate the politics of MPAs and contributing to the effort of the wonderful people of Rapa has been exceptionally rewarding. We hope the politicians take the opportunity to demonstrate some ocean leadership!

Paul is the Vice President of the Royal Geographical Society. For 10 years he was the Base Commander of Rothera Research Station in Antarctica and was also the BAS Diving Officer. He presents television and radio programmes for the BBC.

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